



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

11/23
STRAND PRICE
\$ 5.00

HOW WE TRIED TO SAVE THE TSARITSA



TSARITSA ALEXANDRA FEODOROVNA

HOW WE TRIED TO SAVE THE TSARITSA

By
SERGEI VLADIMIROVICH
MARKOV

Translated by
F. S. FLINT and D. F. TAIT

London and New York

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

First published in England September 1929

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND GRIGGS (PRINTERS), LTD.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. REVOLUTION IN THE HOTEL ASTORIA	1
II. AT TSARSKOE SELO	18
III. THE ARREST OF THE EMPRESS	33
IV. A JOURNEY THROUGH REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA	49
V. THE CONSPIRACY BEGINS	68
VI. MARKOV THE SECOND, INFERNAL MACHINES, AND POISONED DARTS	82
VII. CONSPIRATORS' CONFERENCES	95
VIII. BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH	107
IX. A PRIVATE AMONG PRIVATES	119
X. A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY TO SIBERIA	133
XI. THE HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE	150
XII. RASPUTIN'S SON-IN-LAW	160
XIII. COMRADE MARKOV, RED OFFICER	179
XIV. ARRESTED BY THE SOVIET	194
XV. BISHOP AND CONSPIRATOR	207
XVI. THE EMPEROR'S CONSTABLES	217
XVII. REVENGE	230

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVIII. IN THE "RED URALS"	242
XIX. CATASTROPHE AND FLIGHT	256
XX. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARBED WIRE	267
XXI. THE BITTER END	280

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING
PAGE

TSARITSA ALEXANDRA FEODOROVNA <i>Frontispiece</i>	
THE ASSEMBLED IMPERIAL FAMILY IN THE TIME OF TSAR ALEXANDER II	4
TSAR NIKOLAÏ II	16
TSARITSA ALEXANDRA FEODOROVNA	17
ITALIA	32
ALEXANDROVSKIĬ PALACE IN TSARSKOE SELO	32
LIVADIJA (CRIMEA). THE OLD PALACE	33
LIVADIJA (CRIMEA). THE NEW PALACE	33
THE TSAR IN CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL JOFFRE	48
THE TSAR IN CONVERSATION WITH THE TSARITSA	49
THE TSAR IN CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM II AT REVAL	64
THE TSAR WITH THE ARCHDUKE ERNST LUD- WIG VON HESSE	65
THE TSAR, THE GRAND DUCHESS TAT'IANA, AND THE GRAND DUCHESS OL'GA	80
THE TSAR AND CROWN PRINCE IN RIGA	81
THE TSAR TALKING TO GENERAL JOFFRE	81
THE TSARITSA IN THE UNIFORM OF HER REGI- MENT OF ULAN LIFE GUARDS	96
TSAR NIKOLAÏ II	97
EMPERRESS MARIIA FEODOROVNA WITH THE GRAND DUCHESS OL'GA	112

	FACING PAGE
PARADE IN LIVADIJA, 1913	113
PARADE IN LIVADIJA, 1913: THE TSAR INSPECT- ING THE JOINT GUARD REGIMENT	113
THE TSARITSA AND MME VYRUBOVA	128
POSTCARD PAINTED BY THE TSARITSA	129
THE CROWN PRINCE	144
THE TSARITSA WITH THE SICK CROWN PRINCE	145
ARCHDUKE ERNST LUDWIG VON HESSEN	160
PRINCE AND PRINCESS HEINRICH VON PREUSSEN	161
G. E. RASPUTIN—THE “NEW MAN”	192
B. N. SOLOV’EV	193
J. A. DEN	193
THE AUTHOR AS A CADET	208
THE MEDALLION, A GIFT TO THE AUTHOR	209
DEDICATION ON THE PRAYER-BOOK GIVEN TO THE AUTHOR	209
THE BLAGOVESHCHENSKAIA CHURCH IN TOBOL’SK	240
FOOD CARD ISSUED TO “NIKOLAĬ ALEXANDRO- VICH ROMANOV”	240
THE GOVERNOR’S HOUSE IN TOBOL’SK	241
THE HOUSE OF THE ENGINEER, IPAT’EV	241
PRINCESS WALDEMAR OF PRUSSIA, BARONESS BUCHSHOEVEDEN, PRINCE HENRY OF PRUS- SIA, PRINCESS IRENE OF PRUSSIA, PRINCE WALDEMAR OF PRUSSIA, AND THE AUTHOR	256
THE AUTHOR IN THE UNIFORM OF A SLEEPING COACH ATTENDANT	257

NOTE

SERGEI VLADIMIROVICH MARKOV, the descendant of a long line of Russian soldiers and civil servants, was born at Ialta in the Crimea.

At the outbreak of the War he obtained a commission in the Empress's Own Crimean Cavalry Regiment, although only sixteen years of age; and, in September 1914, he was wounded for the first time.

At the end of February 1917, when this book opens, he was recovering from a second wound, and was under treatment at the military hospital of Tsarskoe Selo.

His account of revolutionary Russia and of his experiences in the forlorn attempt to rescue the Imperial Family is given in a book called *Pokinutaia Tsarskaia Sem'ia* (Amalthea-Verlag, Vienna, 1928). From this book, a German version has been extracted and published under the title: *Wie ich die Zarin befreien wollte* (Amalthea-Verlag, Vienna, 1929). It is this version which has been translated here, with an industrious eye on the Russian text.

At the present time the author is earning his living as a sleeping-car attendant on one of the trans-continental railways.

F. S. F.

HOW WE TRIED TO SAVE THE TSARITSA

CHAPTER I

REVOLUTION IN THE HOTEL ASTORIA

As long as I live I shall not forget those twenty-four hours in the Hotel Astoria.

I had called on my step-sister, and then met an officer of my regiment, Lieutenant Baron Gann, in the restaurant of the Astoria. About eight o'clock in the evening we heard that the Duma had decided not to dissolve, in spite of the Imperial Decree of dissolution. The whole of Petersburg was in a state of extreme excitement.

A little later, a rumour reached the hotel that the rabble, after destroying the police headquarters near by, was also going to honour us with a visit. The news acted like a bolt from the blue. The women residents in the hotel lost all control of themselves; hysterical cries could be heard everywhere; women ran about aimlessly and visited each other's rooms; the lift went up and came down; people stood on the main staircase looking helplessly at each other; and in the lounge an indescribable hubbub and wild confusion reigned.

About midnight the general excitement increased: the management, for safety's sake, had half the

lights turned out, so as to make the building less conspicuous. But this step, instead of calming people down, only caused even greater confusion; the mysterious half-darkness further agitated minds already a prey to nerves.

In the midst of this chaos, the voice of a high military officer staying in the hotel suddenly rang out, informing us officers that Lieutenant-General Volodchenko requested us to assemble in the banqueting-hall. When we appeared, the General addressed us in a fiery speech, declaring that the soldiers and workmen were engaged in disarming the officers; it was not seemly for a Russian officer to surrender his arms without a struggle to a vagabond mob. Therefore, he proposed that we should organize the defence of the Hotel Astoria; a few volunteers should remain below in the lounge to parley with the crowd if they came to the hotel.

"And now, gentlemen," he asked, "who will remain below?"

"I am at your service, General," I said.

Imagine my amazement when I saw that only five officers joined me, two belonging to my own regiment, Captain Gubarev and Lieutenant Gann, Captain Kititsyn, General Staff Colonel Tilli, and another lieutenant whose name I have unfortunately forgotten. All the rest, about a hundred and fifty in all, preserved a gloomy silence. One of them, an individual in the uniform of a General Staff Colonel, even tried to persuade us to hand over our arms.

"Do you imagine, gentlemen, that we are living in the Middle Ages? We must surrender our arms. We cannot resist the will of the people. It is a crime to shed the blood of the people."

As I listened to these words, I wanted to rush at the fellow with my fists; but I restrained myself in time. He had an adherent or two who, in the face of our contempt, made haste to leave the room.

Colonel Tilli and Captain Kititsyn set to work energetically, and with our help the public were cleared out of the lounge. The position of the foreign officers, a large number of whom were staying in the hotel, was a tragi-comedy. The Englishmen, in groups of three or four, proceeded to their own floor with imperturbable calm; their faces wore an expression of complete indifference, with the inevitable pipe stuck in their mouth. The French and Belgians, on the contrary, ran from one room to the other, and besieged us with a perpetual fire of questions about what they should do. The attitude of the Japanese officers was splendid. They looked with the greatest curiosity on the disorder in the hall, including the behaviour of their allies, and conversed together in their guttural speech. Afterwards, they came up and greeted us, and the highest in rank, who wore a major's uniform, said to us in Russian, enunciating the syllables clearly: "Good night." They then bowed, and went to their rooms.

The first part of our task was now carried out, and we proceeded to work out our plan of defence.

Colonel Tilli sent me to fetch General Volodchenko. I looked for him on every floor; but he was nowhere to be found. At last, a page-boy told me that he had left the hotel more than an hour ago by a back door.

This was so unexpected that, when I reported it to the others, they were all speechless at the General's "nerve." But there was no time to be lost, so Colonel Tilli and Captain Kititsyn assumed command. While we were discussing the further steps to be taken, some officers came to us and raised objections to our plans. According to them, it was impossible to embark on a defence of the hotel, without imperilling the women, children, and foreign officers. If the attacking crowd refused to listen to our proposals and to let us get away peacefully, we should be compelled to defend our honour by force of arms, and the excited mob would then revenge themselves on the innocent residents in the hotel.

These objections were so cogent that we felt regretfully compelled to assent to the wishes of these officers. We therefore decided to remain in the lounge, and to treat with the mob in the event of their attacking the hotel. If they became aggressive, we would try all our arts of persuasion. What happened after that must be left to fate. On this understanding, we remained below alone. I sat down in an easy chair near the big window, from which I commanded the Mariia Square. In front of me, the sta of the Tsar Nikolai I gleamed in the light

THE ASSEMBLED IMPERIAL FAMILY IN THE TIME OF TSAR ALEXANDR II

In the middle, the Tsar with his grandson, later Tsar Nikolai II. Left of the Tsar are the Crown Prince Alexandre (later Alexandre III) and his wife Maria Feodorovna



of the rising moon; before it a Palace grenadier, covered with snow, paced up and down as if nothing had happened.

There was not a soul on the square, except for an occasional belated citizen hurrying past. In the distance, rifle and machine-gun shots could be heard. The sky was still red with the burning of the Lithuanian Palace. For some time I gazed before me, my mind empty of thought, then suddenly my brain began to be feverishly active.

“What is happening at Tsarskoe Selo? Is the Tsaritsa safe?”

This idea possessed me completely. “I must get back to Tsarskoe Selo.” The noise of wild shouting and hideous singing reached me. A motley, half-drunk crowd, bawling songs, was pushing along the Voznesenskiĭ Prospekt. I went to the door, just as the crowd arrived at the Mariia Palace. I heard the rattle of broken glass and the crash of the gates as they were broken open, and saw the rabble bursting into the Palace.

Colonel Tilli and Captain Kititsyn now decided to go out to the crowd and to parley with the leaders. They unbuckled their dress swords and went towards the Mariia Square. I followed them, but remained beside the statue, and watched what followed.

The two officers walked calmly up to the crowd. Then ten or fifteen sailors stepped out from the mass, approached the officers in open order, flung themselves down and took aim. But the expected salvo

did not follow. The two officers reached the Palace in safety and disappeared inside.

A quarter of an hour went by. At last they appeared on the square again, and we all three turned back to the Hotel. They told us that in the hall of the Palace they saw sailors and soldiers rummaging about among heaps of official papers and documents which they had torn out of the smashed-up furniture. A civilian took the two officers, escorted by two sailors armed with rifles, into a side room; the soldiers told them that they were searching for Protopopov, the Minister of the Interior, who was supposed to have hidden himself there. Kititsyn replied that it was very curious to look for the Minister in the drawers of desks and under official papers. One of the soldiers, an uncouth recruit, answered: "It's Levorution now, and things are always done like that!"

At that point the civilian, apparently the leader of the group, came in and asked the officers the reason for their appearance on the scene. Then he struck his breast in an impassioned manner, and declared that he was an old ideological revolutionary, and would not allow any violence to women and children. After Tilli and Kititsyn had given him their assurance that there were no machine guns either on or under the roof of the Astoria, and that no police officials were concealed there, this revolutionary hero politely raised his cap, and, with a histrionic gesture, told the officers that they were free to go. As a parting word he said:

"Free citizens do not engage in looting. The hotel guests may sleep in peace."

We continued our observation of the crowd. They stood for another half hour in front of the Palace, then turned slowly away and disappeared down the Voznesenskiĭ Prospekt. The search for Protopopov had apparently been unsuccessful.

Between the statue and the Palace little groups of soldiers and civilians were making a camp fire to warm themselves at out of the papers they had purloined from the Palace. From the neighbouring streets could be heard sporadic shooting and shrieks and groans that froze the marrow. These were the revenge of the bestialized mob on such of the police as were unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. Dead beat, I retired to the room of my new acquaintance, a naval engineer, Lieutenant K., who had most kindly placed his room at my disposal for the night.

How had all this happened so quickly? At noon on this eventful day, the Naval Guard had marched through the streets, with bands playing, in excellent order and discipline, so that we all took heart again at the sight. I myself with some friends hurried after the troops to the Winter Palace, where the loyal regiments and companies of the Petrograd garrison were assembling. I had seen a young girl, who looked like a student, address Colonel Argutinskiĭ-Dolgorukov, who was directing the reception of the troops at the Winter Palace, and say in an impudent voice:

" Is it true that the Government has passed to the Imperial Duma and that the Tsar has abdicated? Why are you assembling the soldiers here? Only, of course, to fire at the working people: isn't that so? "

Her small deep-set eyes under the low brow glittered with malicious fire, and a triumphant smile played round the narrow blue lips of the fanatic.

Then we were fired on by rifles and machine guns from the roof of the staff building, and hurried into the great courtyard of the Palace with the company of the Preobrazhenski Life Guards, which was still in front of the Palace. Soldiers of the most various regiments were crowded there, and General Zankevich, with tears in his eyes, addressed them in a most moving speech.

But the soldiers made very little response to the general's fiery words. At that moment we had a clear vision of the collapse of the powerful Imperial army, and the gulf between officers and men. In view of the deplorable spirit prevailing among the troops in the Winter Palace, we agreed that our presence was superfluous and left the Palace. On the street we were fired at from all sides; salvoes of rifle fire and the rattle of machine guns were everywhere audible; the horizon was red as blood from the reflection of the burning Lithuanian Palace and the many police offices plundered by the crowd. Running, in a sort of improvised open formation, we

reached the Hotel Astoria safe and sound, and there, as a kind of prisoner, for good or ill, I had to pass the night in a stranger's room.

After a brief and uneasy sleep I was suddenly wakened by my room-mate, Lieutenant K., calling to me: "Get up! The sailors have forced their way into the hotel."

From the corridor we heard tumultuous cries and din. As I was going to the door, someone began hammering on the panelling with a heavy object.

"Who's there? Wait a minute; the place is not on fire, is it?" I cried with affected calmness, while the hammering on the door got louder and louder. I opened it and saw a youngish sailor, who burst into the room, carbine in hand, and shouted:

"Surrender your arms, Your Honours."

Then he stopped dead, a little embarrassed. Apparently, he was still quite unaccustomed to this kind of behaviour, and felt himself somewhat uncertain in his part of revolutionary hero. Lieutenant K. said to him in a good-humoured ironical tone:

"Don't get excited, brother, and tell us quietly what it's all about and what you want from us."

"We have orders to disarm officers, at your orders!"

"Who gave you the order?"

"Our superior, a student."

This answer amazed us so much that we were speechless for a moment. At last Lieutenant K. turned to me with a rueful smile: "Well, old chap, we're for it."

He handed over his browning and his dirk to the sailor, and could hardly suppress a sob as he did so. I had a happy thought; I went into the bathroom for an instant, where I placed the ninth cartridge of my mauser pistol crookedly in the magazine so that it looked as if the weapon weren't working. Then I handed it to the bluejacket and drew his attention to the fact that it was out of order.

My ruse succeeded. The bluejacket examined it all over for some time, and then handed it back to me with the words: "We have no use for broken weapons."

I succeeded in saving my sword in the same way. It luckily had a crack in the hilt, and I was able to persuade the bluejacket that it was completely useless. The man belonged, as we heard later, to the crew of the second Baltic Fleet. They had begun by having a three hours' battle with the mutinying soldiers of the Keksgolm Life Guard Regiment, but, after the death of the Commander, Captain Girs, the sailors also expelled their officers and went over to the mutineers. On the present occasion, the newly established Executive Committee of the Duma had sent a detachment of these sailors "to protect the hotel from the looting of the mob."

We had hardly recovered from the first invasion, when another uninvited guest burst into our room. This was a drunken soldier, hung all over with machine gun cartridge belts. He rushed in without knocking and bawled:

"We are masters now! Down with the Tsar! Down with everybody! Now we will create a new regime. The old Government sold us to the Germans, but now we, the free people, will show the Germans!"

To reinforce his harangue, he banged the butt of his rifle several times on the floor, and turned to go. But he stumbled against the doorpost, uttered a frightful oath, and then returned and explained to us that he wasn't a common soldier, but the squadron surgeon of the Tsar's Own Cavalry Regiment. "Now we are splendidly armed," he bawled, "and are not afraid of anyone. I shoot only with dum-dum bullets." He stumbled out of the room with unsteady steps, and we were not disturbed again.

Finally, I decided to go out in search of news. When I reached the main staircase, a scene of terrible devastation met my eyes. Almost all the doors were open and smashed to pieces; from the lounge sounded shrieks, the rattle of broken glass, the crash of splitting wood, and now and then a rifle shot. Some half-grown lads were amusing themselves by shooting into the well of the lift and up the staircase, and some shots struck the balustrade close to me. I judged it prudent to retire to the corridor; there a young woman with a child in her arms was running up and down half-demented, crying: "They have taken him away. Where? Why? What had he done to them?"

I tried to calm her, and learned from her inco-

herent story that about eight o'clock in the morning a crowd had burst into the hotel and dragged nearly all the officers away. It was said that the prisoners were to be taken to the Duma building; but no one knew the reason for this step.

I escorted the lady to her room and hurried to Captain Kititsyn, but could not find him. His room was in wild disorder: all the cupboards and trunks were open and their contents strewn about, and a stupefying smell of scent was coming from the bathroom. I went in and looked through the door of the bathroom, where I saw a most curious sight. A soldier was standing there with his shoulder straps torn off and no belt, busily engaged in sprinkling himself with all the liquids, perfumes, and mouth washes on the dressing-table. The sight was so ludicrous that I withdrew as fast as I could.

When I got back to our room, I found Lieutenant K. waiting for me in the greatest impatience. He besieged me with questions, and we held a little council of war, for the uncertainty of our position was worrying us very much. One thing only was clear; that it was due to pure chance that we had not been dragged off with the other officers. Our room was at some distance from the main corridor and we had simply been overlooked.

As we were likely to be free from fresh invasions for the moment, we decided to wait in the hotel until the end of the street-fighting. We were very anxious about what had happened to Kititsyn, Tilli, and our

other friends, of whose whereabouts we had no idea. About eleven a.m. we went to the second floor. There I was overjoyed to find my stepsister, Ol'ga Kolomnina, quite safe in her room, and with her several persons who had also by a miracle escaped the general raid. They were Colonel Pritvits of the fourth Life Guard Rifle Brigade, a general whose name I have forgotten, half a dozen other officers, and a few ladies. A little later Lieutenant P. turned up with a huge scratch and a swelling on his cheek; a soldier had struck him in the face with the butt of his rifle as he was trying to protect an infirm old general from the mob. Everybody's spirits were very low, and Colonel Pritvits, in particular, was a most pitiful sight. His dress sword had been taken from him, and he was sitting in an armchair, a broken man, wiping the tears from his eyes.

For a tip of five roubles, a revolutionary soldier was easily persuaded to supply us with food; he smuggled in from the ruins of the hotel store-room a jar of caviare weighing several pounds, and after this unusual lunch, we all, even the ladies, felt in much better spirits.

I went downstairs to see what was happening on the lower floors. On the first, I was immediately stopped by a French officer, who begged me to prevent his room from being looted. I at once went with him and found two soldiers busy with the drawers, while a third was cutting open a leather trunk with his Finnish knife.

"What are you doing, brothers?" I called to them. "This is a French officer's room."

"What does that matter to us?" was the reply. "If he is an officer, it serves him right."

A good Russian oath followed. I could control myself no longer, and struck one of the soldiers in the face with my fist. A battle ensued which was decided in our favour by the unexpected intervention of a chief petty officer and an orderly. As soon as the soldiers saw that help had arrived, they scuttled from the room, pursued by the blows of the herculean petty officer.

The Frenchman overwhelmed me with expressions of gratitude, but I went down into the lounge. It was in ruins. All the window panes and glass cases were broken; the big revolving door was smashed to pieces; the porter's box and the whole mechanism were completely gone. Even the pipes of the central heating apparatus had been torn down, and the marble facing of the walls was in smithereens. The candelabra had been the target of bullets, and the whole floor was covered with a rain of broken glass. In the rooms which opened off the hall, it was no better. A crowd of drunken soldiers, civilians, and women were strolling through the great rooms, and completing the destruction where there was anything to complete. Oaths and obscene words echoed everywhere: "The sons of bitches have sat here on their hunkers long enough! Now it's our turn."

Soldiers were standing by the entrance and at the windows, trying in vain to prevent any more people coming in from the street. I went into the restaurant, where an even more desolate scene met my eyes. The enormous sideboard lay overturned on the floor, smashed to pieces. There was nothing left of the tables and chairs except splinters of wood mixed with the rags of the red upholstery on the floor. The instruments of the orchestra had met with the same fate; the glass and china was a great heap of fragments.

As I went in the crowd was engaged in destroying the table silver. Every fork, every spoon, and every other article was being separately bent out of shape. I could not believe my eyes; the whole thing seemed so wildly crazy and improbable.

The doors into the kitchen and the cellar were broken open. Here and there a drunken figure appeared; several lay senseless on the ground. I was curious and went down to the cellar. It was ankle-deep in a sticky, dirty-brown, thick mixture of wine, vodka, champagne, and sauces. Some soldiers were wading in this liquid and striking off the necks of the remainder of the bottles with the airs of connoisseurs. White and red wine were thrown away as useless, but the brandy and spirits were handed over to the crowd, who jubilantly emptied one bottle after the other. The more prudent had crawled into the food section, and were stuffing their pockets with various good things, lobsters, pine-

apples, and cheese. A big tin of caviare was standing open on the table, and several soldiers were feeding from it with soup spoons. Everywhere people were lying about dead-drunk in the dark sticky liquid that covered the floor.

I left the cellar unhindered and returned to the lounge, where I found Naval Lieutenant K., with several chief petty officers and petty officers, busily trying to restore order. I attached myself to them, and first of all had the entrance to the cellar blocked up with the remains of the sideboard. We then tried with the help of the sailors to drive the aimless crowd on to the street; but the work did not proceed very speedliy.

Suddenly, the rattling of spurs was heard, and to our pleasant surprise a company of the Mikhailovich Artillery School marched into the hotel in excellent order. All the officers and cadets were adorned with red ribbons. The School had already made its submission to the Duma, and had now come to restore order in the Astoria.

The Commander noticed our vain attempts to stop the rush of the crowd into the hotel and came to our help. The cadets cleared the lower floor of the wandering loafers, and the Commander appointed Lieutenant K. and me, each with a detachment of fifteen cadets, to search and clear the upper storeys. I thus became as it were "commander of the third storey." In a comparatively short time I succeeded in creating some kind of order: the soldiers and



TSAR NIKOLAÏ II

(After the portrait by Serov)



TSARITSA ALEXANDRA FEODOROVNA

civilians in my sphere of influence were conveyed to the second storey, whence they were sent on by instalments and finally landed in the street.

About seven o'clock a rumour spread with lightning rapidity that it was intended to bombard the Astoria with cannon; but happily this rumour proved to be false. Then came talk of a mutinying cruiser which was supposed to have appeared on the Neva; the company was suddenly recalled and left the hotel. We recognized that there was nothing to be gained by staying and decided to break out. Some wanted to go to relations, others to friends. But my path was not in doubt. It was to Tsarskoe, to my Empress.

CHAPTER 2

AT TSARSKOE SELO

YOU can imagine that we stepped out on to the street with very mixed feelings; but at first everything was quiet. We saw only innumerable motor lorries and magnificent private cars laden with soldiers and workers hurrying by. These drunken bands were all armed to the teeth and hung round with machine gun cartridge belts, which seemed to be the latest revolutionary uniform. The cars were flying enormous red flags, and the sides were covered all over with placards proclaiming, "Down with absolutism! Long live the Provisional Government! Long live Freedom!" One of these placards especially attracted our attention. It said: "Long live the Workers' and Soldiers' Council." As brief as it was obscure. We had no idea then what part this workers' and soldiers' council was destined to play in the future.

On the Gorokhovaia a regular battle was in progress. Several motor ambulances were hurrying up and down the street; bullets whistled round our ears and buried themselves in the walls of the houses. We were covered with the dust of falling masonry; but by a miracle we were not hit by a single bullet.

Of course, we used every gate and every cranny as cover. Never in my life had I felt so helpless as now, although I had been in much more violent bombardments at the front. Our female companion displayed rare courage, and so we slowly proceeded on our way without changing our direction. At the corner of the Gorokhovaia and the Zagorodnyi Prospekt, the police buildings were on fire.

There was not a soul in the station. The great marble bust of the Tsar Nikolai I was covered with tattered red cloth: the station had evidently joined the Revolution. To our unspeakable relief, we just managed to catch a train, the last for the day.

At Tsarskoe Selo I was welcomed like a long-lost brother, and I was hardly able to satisfy the universal curiosity by my tale of my experiences in Petersburg.

The officers who crowded round me assured me that everything was going well in the Palace; but my mind was full of anxiety, and I decided I must gain entry to the Palace at any cost. I had to be with my Empress, to give her all the support and help I could at this fateful time. I rang up Colonel Vil'chikovskii to ask permission to enter. A strange alarmed voice replied: "The Colonel is not here."

I believe that this was a mere excuse. There was nothing for me to do but to ring up his deputy, Colonel Tsyrg. I implored him to give me permission, but I was in despair when I received the dry answer: "I am extremely sorry, Lieutenant, but I can do nothing for you."

I was simply furious at this. The two staff officers knew quite well who and what I was, and to this day I cannot understand why they refused me entry to the Palace. I must needs wait till next day. The night seemed endless to me, and I could not sleep. It was still very early when I left the military hospital. I went rapidly towards the Ekaterininskii Palace, and the nipping air calmed me a little. In one street the mob was destroying a wine shop with the zealous co-operation of the soldiers. I heard shouts and triumphant cries of: "Hurrah! We are the masters now. They have sucked our blood long enough!"

I went on past the grammar school buildings along the wall of the park of the Alexandrovskii Palace. Behind the enclosure stood double sentries, and, here and there, a machine gun: everything seemed prepared for defence. In front of the main entrance I caught sight of Colonel Gerardi in full field equipment; he recognized me immediately. I bombarded him with questions, and he told me what had happened in the Palace in the last three days. They had been anxious days. The heir to the throne and the Grand Duchesses Ol'ga and Tat'iana were down with measles, and in a state that gave rise to anxiety. The Tsaritsa stayed with the invalids continually; and, with regard to the Tsar, the only thing known was that he was on the way from G.H.Q. to Tsarskoe Selo. The temper of the mutinous and quite demoralized reserve battalion and the crews of the tractor batteries was very critical, and excesses

might be feared at any moment. The mixed regiment, on the other hand, still seemed quite trustworthy, unlike the Naval Guard recently brought in as reinforcements. "God alone knows what is still to come," the Colonel concluded, with a deep sigh.

He was summoned into the Palace and departed. I remained standing there in deep depression, waiting for his return.

At last an officer of the Naval Guard appeared in the entry. I went up to him and begged him to permit me to enter. At that moment the State door opened, and a footman came out and said to me:

"Her Majesty the Empress wishes to know your name."

I gave my name.

"Does Your Honour belong to the Crimean Cavalry Regiment?"

I said I did; and the footman disappeared. I was thoroughly puzzled, and the Captain was as amazed as I was. At last, I thought of the possibility that I had been seen from the window.

The footman appeared again: "Her Majesty wishes to see you."

In a state of happy excitement, I followed the footman along the well-known corridors to a staircase. As we reached it, the servant said to me: "Please give yourself the trouble to ascend and knock at the door on the left. Her Majesty expects you."

I went up and through the half-opened door, and found myself immediately in the presence of the

Empress. She wore a white doctor's coat, her face was deadly pale, as if carved out of white marble, and her deeply sunk eyes spoke of sorrow and anxiety.

After I had greeted her respectfully, she held out her hand graciously, led me to a chair, and, in her soft voice, asked me to be seated. After a few introductory remarks, she asked me for a report on what had happened in Petersburg. I had hardly begun my story, however, when the Empress interrupted me with: "This will interest us all." With these words she rose, went into the next room, and returned immediately with the Grand Duchesses Mariia and Anastasiia, and also a tall, slim, dark-haired lady. All three were wearing white coats. The Tsaritsa turned to the newcomers and introduced me:

"This is little Markov, of my regiment!"

Then she turned to me and indicated the three ladies, one after the other, "Mariia, Anastasiia, and Madame Den."

The Empress seated herself on the sofa, with the Grand Duchess Mariia at her side. A place was assigned to me on a chair to her left, while the Grand Duchess Anastasiia sat opposite me, with Madame Den on her left.

"Markov came from Petersburg yesterday, and will give us the latest news."

I began my story, the Empress and the Grand Duchesses frequently interrupting me. They were horrified at my account, and seemed quite unable to realize that the good-natured Russian people had

turned into a horde of bloodthirsty looters. The Empress, in particular, seemed to have had a much better opinion of the people. When I finished, I asked the Empress where His Majesty was. She answered that she did not know, and the Grand Duchess Mariia added, in a trembling voice: "Yes. . . . We do not know where Papa is." Tears of sorrow filled their expressive eyes. In contrast to her daughters, the Tsaritsa was able to control her emotions. Her face showed deep grief; but no muscle of her face moved as she uttered the words: "We do not know what has happened to His Majesty nor where His Majesty is."

When I expressed my regret that my regiment was not in Tsarskoe in these troubled times, the Empress said:

"Yes, I too regret it keenly. My commander was right when he asked my permission to order the regiment here. Now it is too late for that."

With these words, she shook her head slightly, and gazed at me with sad and anguished eyes. After an audience of half an hour, the Empress rose and gave me her hand. I took leave of all present and left the room. Her Majesty accompanied me to the door, gave me her hand once more, and added, noticing my confusion:

"Thank you again for your interesting news. I am convinced that the Emperor's arrival will change many things. . . . And all this is bound to happen during the war. Do not lose heart. *Au revoir!*"

As I returned to the military hospital, everything appeared to me in a rosier light: the Empress's confidence had given me fresh courage. But I had soon to recognize how serious and threatening the situation really was. Every moment I became more and more convinced that the position of the Imperial Family was becoming worse all the time, and that the Tsaritsa's hopes, based on the speedy return of the Tsar, were becoming more and more illusory. The wildest rumours were current about the whereabouts of the Tsar.

Spirits rose a little at the announcement that Adjutant-General Ivanov had been proclaimed dictator, and was to proceed from headquarters to Tsarskoe to suppress the unrest with a battalion composed entirely of Knights of St. George. But next morning we got word that he and his whole detachment had been stopped on the way. This was truly pouring oil on the flames. Sedition proudly raised its head again in Petersburg, for these unsuccessful measures showed more clearly than anything that had previously happened the complete powerlessness and bewilderment of the authorities, who had to abandon one position after the other without a struggle.

Next morning I was called to the telephone and ordered to go before a medical board for examination. Very much surprised, I set out, and on my way again encountered many motor lorries full of drunken soldiers and looting rabble. At last I

reached the appointed place, and found there several regimental doctors without the insignia of their rank, and lacking the imperial initials on their shoulder straps. Old General Bushen was chairman of the board, and signed every document laid before him without looking at it.

Dr. Gerasimovich, whom I already knew, put me through a kind of cross-examination. I had been wounded at the Front and was still convalescing; but I had recently sent in a petition asking to be sent back to service at the Front. This petition now lay before Dr. Gerasimovich, and he told me that I would receive my orders next day.

"I shall not go to the Front, nevertheless," I replied coolly.

"Why not? What do you mean?"

"My health does not permit of it, and, besides, I refuse to go."

Gerasimovich was greatly surprised by my attitude; he got more and more excited, and tried to find out the reasons for my refusal. His colleague listened with curiosity, and even General Bushen put his hand behind his ear with a surprised expression.

Finally, I could control myself no longer and cried: "A fortnight ago I wanted to go back to the Front; now I no longer want it. I confess quite openly that I have lost all desire to serve in such an army. So please examine me, as I intend to resign from the service."

General Bushen made an angry gesture, and lisped

from his toothless mouth, " Lieutenant, you are much too young to pass judgments of that kind. You will see. . . ."

" Yes, I'm afraid I shall see a great deal, Your Excellency," I answered defiantly. The general shrugged his shoulders.

My injured ear was in such a state that I could only be ordered to the Front at my own personal request. Gerasimovich was furious with me; but, to his great chagrin, had to agree after the examination that I really was quite unfit for service at the Front. So he placed me in the third category of wounded, which meant being assigned to the reserve regiment.

I bade a cool good-bye to the board and returned to the hospital. Ensign L. had arrived from Petersburg bringing the latest news. The chaos in the capital had, if possible, increased. One order of the Duma followed another, but no one took any notice of them. In addition to the Duma, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council had set itself up; but what its functions were was for the moment quite obscure. According to the ensign, the ominous "Order No. 1" of the new Government was posted up everywhere, in which all the provisions of the military service regulations were repealed by a single stroke of the pen.

The ensign's stories and our endless discussion of them made the time pass quickly, and so evening came, followed by an uneasy night. Next morning

Tsarskoe was plunged into excitement and terror by the strangest rumours. The population took refuge in cellars, the shops remained closed, and bands of drunken looting soldiers roamed the empty streets. It was rumoured that the artillery batteries stationed at Tsarskoe intended to bombard the Palace. In the evening, my stepsister Nina rang up and told me in a shaken voice that the abdication of the Tsar in favour of his brother, the Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, had just been announced.

Next morning I could not bear to stay any longer at the hospital. I hurried out, was lucky enough to find a sledge, and drove to the Palace as fast as possible. Some groups of soldiers looked at us suspiciously as we dashed past; my hands involuntarily closed round the butt of my mauser pistol, for there had already been cases of officers being forced to remove the Imperial monogram from their uniforms, and I intended to defend mine arms in hand.

As it happened, the sledge soon encountered a crowd of soldiers, and threatening cries arose. The driver whipped up his horse; I drew my pistol, several shots were fired, and I fired back. The horse shied, got through, and saved us from this danger; but only to land us immediately in the gutter. But this accident did not delay us long, and I arrived at the entrance to the Palace safe and sound.

The sentries I had to pass saluted me in the correct manner, and, after a few minutes' wait, a footman escorted me to the upper floor of the Palace, where

I was shown into a drawing-room. I paced nervously up and down the room, deep in thought, until the door opened, and Madame Den, the Empress's friend, came in. The dead-white of her face stood out in contrast to the dark frame of her blue-black hair, and her white coat made her delicate figure appear even more slender.

"Pardon me, Madame," I said, "for taking the liberty of appealing to you at this sad time. I cannot bear to remain inactive in hospital any longer. My place is here, with Her Majesty. I am ready to remain as the humblest servant, if you will only enable me to fulfil my most sacred duty. You are my last hope; I implore you to tell Her Majesty that I am here."

Madame Den came up to me, held out both her hands, and began to sob. We sat down on a little leather sofa, and Madame Den thanked me for my offer in a voice half-choked with tears. Finally, she promised to tell the Empress of my arrival, and then left the room. My meeting with this woman, whose tired, sad eyes bore witness to deep sorrow, moved me greatly.

Soon an elderly gentleman of medium height came in. I recognized him as the Director of the Imperial Chancellery, Alexandre Sergeevich Taneev, the father of Madame Vyrubova. He welcomed me very cordially, took me into the next room, where he introduced me to his wife, and invited me to lunch.

About three o'clock Madame Den appeared again,

and brought me the Empress's cordial thanks. As for my staying at the Palace, she wished me to approach the Commandant, Major-General Resin, himself.

I tried in vain to get in touch with this officer, but he was nowhere to be found. The uncertainty of my position increased my nervousness, and, at last, about eight in the evening, I told the footman to ask Madame Den if she would see me once more. The servant soon came back with a message that the Empress herself wished to speak to me.

He led me through innumerable rooms and halls, all filled with the perfume of fresh flowers. At last I passed through a long, snowy-white corridor in the upper storey into the play-room of the Heir-Apparent, which was divided into three sections by white enamelled wooden partitions. One section was full of toys; another contained dolls' furniture, and was provided with a placard inscribed: "Admittance only with the permission of Ol'ga and Tat'iana." In the centre and largest section stood a table covered with French and English periodicals, with a box of water colours and a pair of scissors lying beside them. Evidently the Heir-Apparent was in the habit of cutting pictures out of these periodicals and painting them. On the wall hung a neatly written time-table of studies for all the Imperial children.

As I was studying the furniture of this room, the Empress came in. She gave me her hand graciously, and said with motherly kindness: "Good evening, dear little Markov."

She was still wearing the white hospital coat, and her eyes were even more sunken than on the previous day and full of deep sorrow.

"I am very much touched, and thank you most heartily for your brave and noble offer. It was fine of you to come and not to have forgotten me on this sad day. Perhaps better times will come again, and then I will reward your loyalty. You may always turn to me, and I will always do anything I can for you."

"I would gladly keep you with me," she went on, "but unfortunately that is now impossible. The soldiers have elected Colonel Lazarev as Commander in place of General Resin, and I do not know what would be his attitude to you. I am very sorry to have to say this, but alas! so much does not depend on us now. The times are so difficult. . . ."

A sad, almost imperceptible smile showed on her face. "I beg you to remove my monogram from your uniform. It would hurt me very much if it were torn off by a drunken soldier on the street. But I believe that you will go on wearing the symbol in your heart! Please tell the regiment that this is my wish, and give all the officers my sincerest thanks for their loyal services. Tell them that I send them all my most cordial greetings. Be calm and do not lose heart. God is merciful, and, if God wills, all may yet go well. Remember that we cannot foresee the future and that nothing is lost yet."

I was almost unmanned by emotion. The Em-

press noticed my state, laid her hand on my shoulder, and repeated in her soft voice: "Calm yourself, remember that God is merciful."

"Where is His Majesty?" I asked in a husky voice.

"His Majesty will soon be here. For the moment they will not let him through, as they are afraid that we should be stronger united. I am so anxious about him . . . we should have been together at this time—but once more, my most sincere thanks for what you have done. I wish you all that is good. Do not forget your old commander!"

I knelt down and kissed the hand the Empress held out to me. She made the sign of the Cross Russian fashion, and turned to go, but stopped once more.

"Have you got papers from the new Government yet?"

"No, Your Majesty."

"Then will you please procure them to-morrow. I should like to send you with a letter to His Majesty, if he is unable to get here. You will receive the letter through Colonel Vil'chkovskii, or better—do you know my lady-in-waiting, Margarita Sergeevna Khitrovo?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then it will be best to do it through her. Hold yourself in readiness. His Majesty is not allowed through, and I do not know what will happen. So I count on you. God protect you. I wish you all that is good."

With these words the Empress left the room. I remember as in a dream that the footman escorted me to the gate. It was not until I was back in the hospital that I became fully conscious again. I then proceeded, in obedience to the Empress's orders, to remove the monogram from my uniform, a task that brought tears to my eyes.



IALTA



ALEXANDROVSKIĬ PALACE IN TSARSKOE SELO



LIVADIJA (CRIMEA). THE OLD PALACE



LIVADIJA (CRIMEA). THE NEW PALACE

CHAPTER 3

THE ARREST OF THE EMPRESS

I WILL now briefly relate how one procured official documents in the early days of the Revolution. God knows it would have been comic if it had not been at the same time so vexatious and deplorable.

The Empress had commanded me to get a certificate from the new Government; so I proceeded at once next morning to the new Commandant's headquarters, which had been established in the town hall of Tsarskoe Selo. As soon as I got there, I observed a symbol of the revolutionary "regime." A long-haired soldier with his coat unbuttoned was standing at the entrance, smoking, although he was on sentry duty, one cigarette after the other and spitting on the ground.

In the council room, I noticed that the large portrait of the Tsar had been turned face to the wall and that the crown was covered with red cloth. At the council table sat a group consisting of the commandant, Colonel Boldeskul, two ensigns, and three soldiers. They were all decked with red ribbons.

The room in which the certificates were issued was full of officers. The procedure for procuring these remarkable documents was very simple. A clerk

typed the name of the commandant on a blank lithographed form, since that honourable gentleman had no time for such trivialities. One or other of the ensigns signed it in place of the adjutant, without reading it. The fortunate possessor of the new document had then to proceed to the next room, where he was permitted personally to stamp it with the seal, which was under a heap of papers from the archive cabinet that had been broken open. Since a new "revolutionary seal" was not yet available, the seal of the mayor of Tsarskoe Selo was in use for the time being. This document, historical in its way, read:

" Certificate No. 62.

" This is to show that Lieutenant Markov of the Crimean Cavalry Regiment has declared his adherence to the Provisional Government, and has been assigned to the commandant of the garrison of Tsarskoe Selo, as is confirmed by signature and seal.

" The commandant of the garrison of Tsarskoe Selo.

" COLONEL BOLDESKUL."

When I got home I added in my own handwriting: " and is authorized to travel to and from Petrograd."

I left as soon as I had received the document. An old izvoshchik drove me to the Empress's Second Military Hospital to meet the lady-in-waiting, Miss Khitrovo. The streets were empty as usual, with only groups of soldiers standing about here and there, and the usual motor cars rushing about,

decked with red flags and full of shouting soldiers. When I arrived at the hospital I dismissed the driver, and went through the garden to the building with which I had long been familiar. As I entered the reception room, a strange picture met my eyes. Officers were standing about, some in uniform, some in hospital dress, all shouting at once very loudly. I caught excited cries of:

“ Why remove the portraits. It is no one’s business what hangs in our rooms. It’s a dirty trick! We will not allow the portraits to be taken down. Don’t interfere with anything.”

I pushed my way in, and saw a curious-looking person with cropped hair, a short skirt, and a leather coat with an open collar. She was gesticulating wildly and crying:

“ No, the pictures must come down. I have received a categorical order from the Soviet. I refuse to take the responsibility, and cannot allow the portraits to remain.”

I saw at once what was up. It was the portraits of the Tsar that all the row was about. The officers were opposing their removal, and the woman insisting on her own way. The appearance of this masculine woman was most unpleasing. An officer turned to me and said:

“ Isn’t this atrocious? When did she join the ‘ Left ’? ”

I asked if the woman was a deputy from the garrison committee.

The officer gave me an astonished look: "What's that you say? No, she is our surgeon, Princess Gedroits."

I was so amazed that I was struck dumb, and went out, appalled at the scene. In the corridor I met the lady-in-waiting, Miss Khitrovo.

"Margarita Sergeevna! how can such things be allowed?" I exclaimed, pointing to the waiting room. "It is a scandal." She had tears in her eyes, and she too had grown thinner in the short time since I had last seen her. "Let us get away from here," she cried. "I am going to Petersburg. To stay here is too agonizing."

I quite understood how she felt, and did not try to stop her. We went to the station together. It was chock-full of soldiers, lounging about idly and aimlessly, chewing sunflower seeds, and littering the platforms with shells and cigarette ends. We got into a carriage with great difficulty, and travelled to Petersburg in a depressed silence. When we arrived, Miss Khitrovo said good-bye to me, after arranging to meet, if necessity arose, at the house of my stepsister, Nina Ivanovna Kologrivova.

I went to Sergeevskaia Street, where my friend Baron Georgiï Nikolaevich von der Hoven lived. I wanted to discuss things with him, and get a notion of what steps we should take to organize all the people who remained loyal to the Emperor and Empress.

The streets were hung with red flags. The police

building opposite the station had a dark and melancholy look: it was only a bare smoke-blackened skeleton of a house. On the pavements strolled gangs of dirty, poorly and carelessly dressed soldiers, bawling and shouting foul obscenities. The middle-class people were pressing fearfully against the walls of the houses. The Vladimirskaia Square reminded one of the market place of a little provincial town, and was crammed with a motley rabble. On an elevation stood a suspicious-looking figure haranguing the crowd in a raucous voice. A soldier with his epaulettes torn off was standing near the speaker shouting senselessly: "We must. Yes; we must." I did not succeed in discovering what it was all about, and what it was these people "must" do.

I found Baron von der Hoven at home. He was sitting in his room, gloomily smoking one cigarette after another. I told him what had happened at Tsarskoe in the last few days. In spite of his youth, he was a very serious and well educated man. After he had listened attentively to my story, I asked him to explain the position in Petersburg. He was very pessimistic and declared that the new Government, in spite of its comparatively easy victory, could not be permanent. The newly formed Workers' and Soldiers' Council had from the start laid emphasis on the fact that their chief function was to supervise the activities of the Government. Thus a perfectly absurd situation had arisen; a Government, appointed by the people, which no longer possessed the

confidence of the people. The consequence was that the chief leaders of this Government had completely lost their heads. They had let the reins slip from their hands, and the real power immediately passed to the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. The latter was posting up all over the town one order after another, in which everything connected with military discipline was abolished. New rights were granted to the "citizen soldiers," while the officers' rights had been entirely done away with.

The night before the terrible news had arrived from Kronstadt of a bloody massacre among the officers of the Baltic Fleet in the port of Kronstadt. The soldiers had slaughtered the port commandant, Admiral Viren, Admiral Nebol'sin, and more than a hundred and fifty other officers, and thrown them into holes in the ice. The morning after had come the news of the murder of the squadron commander, Admiral Nepenin. Officers who had succeeded in escaping gave frightful details. Things had been particularly atrocious in the second battleship squadron, where the officers had been slaughtered *en masse*. The officers of the Petersburg garrison were terrorized by this news, and were hiding in their homes.

I discussed all that had happened with the Baron, and we arrived at the view that for the present the only thing to be done was to organize all who remained loyal and await the further course of events. It was necessary to go to work with the utmost

caution; therefore we made up our minds to build up our organization on the lines of a freemasons' lodge, and to use jesuitical methods of work and warfare. We finally decided to do nothing without the approval of the Empress, and accordingly I wrote a letter to Madame Den and asked her to show it to the Tsaritsa. I did not go back to Tsarskoe that evening, but remained overnight with the Baron, which was necessary in any case as our conversation lasted till dawn. Next morning found me again in the hospital at Tsarskoe, where I wrote the following letter to Madame Den:

" Her Majesty and Their Highnesses are in danger. My experiences of the last few days and the things I have seen with my own eyes indicate all too clearly whither we are drifting and what we may expect. I have just come back from Petersburg; the atmosphere there is intolerable. Caprice rules in the city, and confusion and chaos are everywhere. I beg you to read this letter with sympathy, and try to understand the real emotion and mood that dominate me. There are still people who are devoted to Their Majesties. We desire to come together, to organize ourselves and keep guard over our Imperial House. We place our lives at Their Majesties' disposal; therein lies our duty; that is the aim of our lives. Everything makes it plain that the Emperor and Empress cannot remain in Russia; the dangers threatening them are too great. If these bandits will not voluntarily let them go, we will find ways of releasing them from

this shameful imprisonment. We are ready for anything.

"I implore you to show this letter to the Tsaritsa. We will act in whatever way will be agreeable to Her Majesty. As for me, my life is over: I am ready to abandon home and parents. My one hope of happiness is to be of direct service to Their Majesties.

"I most earnestly beg you to say to the Empress that if Her Majesty leaves Russia I will accompany her as the humblest of her servants. That is the only goal I strive for. I hope that you will pardon my boldness. The thought that I am not with them, that I had to leave the Palace for good three days ago, causes me great anguish . . . but may God's will be done. I am hardly master of myself; I am broken morally and physically. Never shall I forget your sympathy for me. Tell Her Majesty of the boundless love and most humble devotion I shall cherish for her to the end of my days. May God grant us strength in this difficult time. May God in His mercy protect you."

Next morning I called on my stepsister, Nina Kologrivova, and in her drawing-room met Margarita Sergeevna Khitrovo. In a halting voice she told us of events in the Palace during the last few days. Nina wept, and I could hardly hold back my tears. She told us that from to-day entry to the Palace was forbidden to all. The Emperor was expected to arrive in the evening. Before his arrival the joint

regiment was to be replaced by a new Revolutionary Guard. This news struck us like a thunderclap: it meant that we were cut off from Their Majesties.

I sat by the fire brooding, weighed down with grief. Miss Khitrovo would be unable to deliver my letter to Madame Den! I took the letter out of my pocket, and a few seconds later it went up the chimney in flames, and with it were consumed my dreams of the previous night.

A few days later I heard that my brother-in-law, Kostia Kologrivov, had had to leave the Palace and was now at home. I hardly recognized Kostia, he had changed so much during the last few weeks. Looking ten years older, thin and wasted, he sat by the same fire at which, three weeks before, we had discussed the future with confidence. I begged him to tell me everything, and he described the tragic events of which he had been a witness:

"On the 24th or 25th February the regimental commander asked us not to leave Tsarskoe, but to remain in the regimental area, as increasingly disturbing reports were coming from Petersburg, each one worse than the last. On the night of the 28th we were sitting comfortably at dinner in the officers' club, when suddenly a trial alarm sounded. All seven companies took their places according to instructions round the Palace; the gates were closed. My company was stationed immediately behind the main entrance. We remained there till morning in twenty degrees of frost. No one troubled about this;

all knew their duty. Our hearts were very sad and heavy. I shall never forget that night! We all stood in depression and waited . . . but no one knew what we were waiting for. One thing only was clear; that around us something unprecedented, something that had never happened before, was in progress. In the morning, very early, the Empress appeared, accompanied by the Grand Duchess Mariia.

“‘We wish you good health, Your Imperial Majesty,’ was our answer to her greeting.

“The Empress walked past all the companies, spoke to the soldiers and greeted the officers. We were amazed at her calm and dignity. She was pale, and her eyes were sunken with sleepless nights, but her voice was tranquil. It seemed as if she paid no heed to the shooting and the shouts of the drunken soldiers which penetrated from the town.

“On the personal command of the Empress six companies were sent away, and only one left to perform the ordinary sentry duties. The men of the six companies were ordered into the Palace, where a meal was provided for them in the cellars. The good Empress had no idea that by her wish to quarter the soldiers in the Palace she was exposing them to the criminal propaganda of her own servants. You will hardly believe it, but it was so. Some officers overheard stablemen, cooks, and other representatives of the staff mixing with the soldiers and saying to them:

“‘Why do you lie there like dogs in straw? How

long are you going to stand on guard all night in the cold?"

"On 1st March the Grand Duke Pavel Alexandrovich came to the Palace. He was greatly excited and ran quickly up the steps, on which several of his officers were standing. We asked him questions about the position in Petersburg, to which he replied only:

"' Gentlemen, you are our last and only hope.'

"Then we understood the full tragedy of the situation. We, the last hope. Do you see what that means?"

Kostia's eyes were full of tears; he continued his story in a shaking voice:

"We would have died to protect the Palace from the mob. Yes, we would have done all we could, men and officers both. I am convinced of that. We would have acted like the Swiss Guard in old times. . . . But the Empress herself would not allow us to die for her. . . . I will tell you about that later. . . .

"On the morning of the 2nd March all the officers not on duty were together in the service room; suddenly an officer of the Naval Guard rushed in, pale and agitated:

"' All is lost! The sailors have abandoned the Palace.'

"We stood there as if turned to stone. Then he told us what difficulty and trouble he had encountered in getting away from the Ekaterininskiĭ Palace, from his own sailors, who wanted to take him with them. In his flight he had vaulted a wall over six feet high, and had hidden in the park of the Alex-

androvskii Palace. The sailors had made up their minds in the morning to leave Tsarskoe Selo and to proceed to Petersburg, to the Duma, to join the other sailors who were already there; the officers were to be forced to accompany them. The sailors were evidently in relations with the battalion which had made a procession to the Duma under the leadership of the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich. The sailors had thrown away their flags and abandoned their machine guns on the journey; they were pouring into Petersburg like an undisciplined horde.

"This news was shattering, and Captain Miasoedov-Ivanov, the commander of the Naval Guard, was beside himself. The Colonel of our regiment undertook the melancholy mission of telling the Empress this news, for Miasoedov-Ivanov was so crushed by the treachery of his men that he could not utter a syllable.

"The treachery of the Naval Guard was followed by another blow. That same morning, General Grotten took me with him to speak to the new revolutionary commandant of Tsarskoe, to see if they could clear up the situation.

"The new commandant's quarters were in the Town Hall. We drove there, and I accompanied the General to the commandant's room. You yourself have seen what the Town Hall looks like now. Grotten remained only a few minutes with the commandant, and returned immediately escorted by two tattered soldiers. I ran up to him:

“ ‘ Where now, Colonel? ’

“ ‘ Don’t trouble, don’t trouble. . . . It’s all the same,’ he stammered, with a despairing gesture.

“ I rushed into the commandant’s office without knocking, and there at a table covered with papers I saw my fellow officer, the Imperial Rifleman, Colonel von Weiss! He was the first revolutionary commandant of Tsarskoe! With hardly concealed agitation I asked him:

“ ‘ Colonel, what is happening to the General? What do you order me to tell Her Majesty? ’

“ The Colonel looked at me calmly, and answered coolly and indifferently:

“ ‘ Please tell the Empress that I have had the General arrested.’

“ ‘ Nothing else?’

“ ‘ Nothing else—’

“ I turned mechanically and left the accursed room like one in a dream.

“ Her Majesty took Grotten’s arrest greatly to heart. That was the signal for the beginning of all that was to happen a week later!

“ However strange it may sound, we first heard of the abdication of the Tsar from a Court courier and old retired lackey on the afternoon of 3rd March. He told us the terrible news in a whisper. We could not and would not believe it; but that same evening the Empress sent for General Resin and officially informed him of the abdication of the Tsar in favour of his brother, the Grand Duke Mikhaïl Alexandrovich.

"Next day we heard that the Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich had also abdicated, and that the Government had passed to the Duma. A little later I ran up against a General unknown to me in the hall of the main entry. He was wearing a red ribbon across his breast and was accompanied by two civilians also wearing red ribbons. I heard the General say in a loud voice that he wished to see the 'Ex-Empress.' For some unknown reason he addressed himself to me.

"'Her Majesty, the Empress, is trying to sleep,' I answered, 'and the other Imperial Highnesses are in bed seriously ill.'

"The General merely replied curtly:

"'Please tell her that this is not the time to sleep.'

"I could hardly restrain myself, and asked bluntly:

"'Who are you, Excellency?'

"The General looked at me, apparently astonished at my question; then he said reluctantly:

"'I am General Kornilov.'

"'I have personally no knowledge of your arrival. Please apply to the officer on duty.'

"The Tsaritsa sent a message by a lackey to the new arrivals that she would await them in the Lime Drawing-Room. I followed them. Just as Kornilov and his companions entered the room, the Tsaritsa came through the other door, wrapped in a *peignoir*. She went firmly up to Kornilov, and asked him without giving him her hand:

"'What do you want with me, General?'

"Under the Tsaritsa's steadfast gaze, Kornilov instinctively adopted a soldierly bearing, and said in a husky voice:

"'I am very sorry, it is most unpleasant to me to have to tell you. . . . But you know what is happening in Petersburg. . . . For your own safety I am compelled. . . .' Here he stopped short as if he could no longer breathe.

"The Empress interrupted him; her quiet, steady voice rang through the room as sharp as steel:

"'I know everything. You have come to arrest me?'

"Kornilov became even more confused, and could only mumble:

"'Yes, at your service?'

"'Nothing else?'

"'No.'

"The Empress gave him another penetrating look, then turned away, and went quietly into her rooms without saying good-bye.

"We were of course in the depths of depression, but we hoped to be allowed to remain in the Palace until the arrival of the Tsar. He was expected at any moment, and we intended to give him a State welcome as usual. We hoped that this ceremonious reception would perhaps bring the soldiers to reason, and that an improvement in the general temper would result. However, the 'comrades' saw through our plan, and about four hours before the Tsar arrived, they got themselves replaced by the First

Regiment. When these ‘revolutionary gendarmes’ appeared to relieve us, the battalion, as one man, refused to let them enter the Palace, and posted machine guns. In another moment there would have been a bloody affray. But the Empress sent for Colonel Lazarev and begged him to make no resistance. ‘Do not repeat the horrors of the French Revolution, and give up the defence of the marble staircase,’ were her words.

“We had to bow to the poor Empress’s order. I remember the last audience she gave me as if seen through a mist. She blessed me with a little ikon she wore, and told me she would never forget my loyal services. Tears came into my eyes, and the Empress also wept.

“Our battalion left the Palace in perfect order; we took our regimental colours with us. Hardly had we marched off when we heard shots. It was the soldiers of the First Regiment shooting the black swans on the lake in the park of the Palace. The deer and the goats peacefully grazing there shared the same fate. That was the first blood shed in the precincts of the Palace. When they told the Tsaritsa, she only said:

“‘That’s the beginning.’

“That is all I have to tell you, Serezha, of recent happenings. The Empress was right: that was the beginning, but what, what will be the end?”

Kologrivov gave a deep sigh, and looked at me questioningly. What answer could I give him?



THE TSAR IN CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL JOFFRE

In the background Grand Duke Nikolaï Nikolaevich
Imperial Manœuvres, 1913



THE TSAR IN CONVERSATION WITH THE TSARITSA. IMPERIAL MANOEUVRES, 1913

CHAPTER 4

A JOURNEY THROUGH REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

ONE fine day I received orders to join my unit, the eighth Reserve Cavalry Regiment, immediately. The regiment was, however, stationed at Novogeorgievsk in the Kherson Government, right away down in South Russia, truly a pretty fair journey from Tsarskoe Selo. All European distances are mere trifles in comparison!

Well, I was glad to leave Tsarskoe, and so I proceeded very cheerfully to the station. There, on the platform, wild cries and lamentations were resounding: "Comrades, permit me, please let me in, for Christ's sake." Two soldiers with their rifles slung on their shoulders, coats unbuttoned, and caps on the back of their heads, were keeping a firm hold of a woman who was trying to get on to the footboard of the train, which was already in motion.

"Where are you off to, my wench?" cried one of the soldiers, shoving the unfortunate woman aside. The rattling of the broken window panes drowned the poor woman's entreaties. The laughing pug-face of a sailor shot through the empty window frame.

"It doesn't matter, comrade. It's freedom now," some one cried. "Citizen, comrade citizen, will you please be so good as to deliver this letter at Dno Station?" said an active-looking student of Hebraic cast of countenance to a soldier who was meditatively picking his nose.

"Be off with you," was the reply, followed by an oath.

"That's a nice way to talk! Ugh, how coarse!"

"Don't talk rubbish, you mangy Jew-boy, or I'll fly at you and break every rib in your body."

The train gathered speed and left the station. Soon the town of Tsarskoe Selo came in sight. The golden cross on the blue domes of the Feodorovskii Cathedral glittered with all the colours of the rainbow in the pale Northern sun.

The corridor was crammed with bundles, trunks, and food sacks; on this litter soldiers of all the regiments of the Petrograd garrison sat or lay closely packed together. Many were asleep at full length on the floor, while the civilian public, although they had tickets, were squeezed against the walls and in the corners of the compartments. Coarse laughter, dirty jokes, and cynical abuse could be heard.

I could stand it no longer, and pushed my way into a crowded first class carriage, in which the air was so thick that you could have cut it with a knife. On the lower seat sat five hospital orderlies belonging to the Baltic Fleet. In the corner, leaning against the table, slept a bearded person wearing a fur cap,

who smelt of boot grease and something else indefinable. On the upper seat lay a corpulent military doctor, breathing heavily; every minute he pulled out his handkerchief to fan himself. My place was beside him, reserved by my field trunk, and I crawled up with some difficulty.

The bearded "comrade" woke up, uttered an incoherent curse, and blew his nose in the most primitive fashion; then he pulled off his boots, unrolled the coverings from his feet and hung them over our coats.

Zhlobin. Red flags everywhere. A big placard hit us in the eye. I read the lettering: "Down with absolutism! Long live the Workers' and Soldiers' Council!"

The station, the rails, the platform, were all packed tight with dirty, ragged, and impudent soldiery. The incoming trains were stormed by the "comrades." The clash of broken window panes, everlasting cursing, and smutty songs filled the spring air.

There were no station police; in their stead, little figures with their rifles slung on their shoulders and white bands on the left sleeve of their coats, were running about; they were the new guardians of order, the "station militia." One of them, a seventeen year old boy, in a military coat and a commercial-college cap, was bidding the soldiers disperse and leave a passage through the station:

"Comrades, do not disturb the peaceful course of intelligent life!"

The "comrades" laughed loudly; one of them spat to the side and growled:

"And who are you then, you son of a dog?"

The person thus addressed leapt aside in alarm. Near a military canteen a meeting was being held. A group of soldiers with red rosettes were standing on packing cases. One of them, a young lad with no cap and an open shirt, very red and heated, was shouting in a raucous voice:

"Comrades, this is a provocation! It is not we who should go. It is not our transport, but theirs. I am right, comrades."

Cries of "right" on the one hand, and "down with him" on the other, resounded from a hundred throats.

"Mit'ka, chase him out, what makes him so important?"

The speaker was seized by his coat-tails and pulled down. Another took his place:

"Free citizens, the Council has decided that you shall go off first."

"Down with him!"

"Comrades, the Soldiers' Council. . . ."

"Away with him! To the devil with him! Let Khamenko speak."

The delegate was quite exhausted and jumped down from the box. Comrade Khamenko now took it up:

"Down with the Council! It has sold itself to the officers. We must have new elections. There

must be a ballot; but there is no need for it to be general or secret. . . . Our blood has been sucked for long enough! Am I right, comrades?"

"Right! Down with everybody!"

I gazed at the scene uncomprehendingly. "What's happening?" I asked an old station official.

"These are the active troops. They are disputing about which is to go to the Front first," he said, making a hopeless gesture with his hand, and proceeded slowly on his way.

Immediately afterwards the train left the station at a snail's pace, literally forcing its way through the human mass. The same scene was enacted at every station. Meetings, meetings everywhere. Finally we arrived at Kremenchug, the first halting-place on my long journey.

An izvoshchik conducted me in a broken-down fly to a little house which proudly displayed the name of "Hotel Rossiia." I was half-crazy with delight as I stepped across the threshold of this dirty, smoky Jewish hotel. I was dead tired after the experiences of the last twenty-four hours.

Next morning I proceeded down to the bank of the Dnieper and went on board the steamer. Some one-year volunteers belonging to the Akhtyr and Voznesensk regiment clicked their spurred heels smartly and saluted me in military fashion. That made a most pleasant impression after all I had seen so far.

The passengers on the boat were a little mixed.

They included several Jews, two or three post office officials, and a stout lady, who was, besides, in an interesting condition, and complained continually of the stuffiness of the saloon.

At last, rows of little houses and a few factory chimneys appeared in the distance. It was Novo-georgievsk, the goal of my journey. The steamer passed a number of canals and came to a landing stage. With great trouble I found a carriage and arrived at last, after half an hour's drive, at a two-storied house, which called itself an "inn." I climbed up a steep flight of steps, and was received by a plainly dressed Jewess. To my relief, she had a room vacant, and how can I describe my amazement when I found it was habitable and comparatively clean.

After I had had a wash and put on field uniform, I proceeded to the regimental office to report to the commander. On the unpaved streets dust lay in thick layers, which made the street invisible at every gust of wind. The roads were populated chiefly by pigs, hens, cows, and geese; the little clay huts all had thatched roofs. The soldiers I met, to my great astonishment, saluted me in the correct fashion.

After I had called on the officers, I wanted to go to the office, but was not permitted. I was bombarded with questions: "You come from Petersburg? What are things like there? How is the Revolution proceeding? Is it true that three thousand officers have been murdered in Kronstadt? Here

we know nothing at all. Tell us about it. The commandant is not there yet, you have plenty of time." I didn't know whom to answer first, and so I briefly described the situation in Petersburg.

In the officers' club, too, I was surrounded on all sides, and the reading room was packed in a twinkling. Willy-nilly, I had to deliver an impromptu speech and give a report on events in Petersburg. I felt that my speech was going smoothly, because I was among sympathetic people. I put no restraint on myself, but spoke my mind bluntly, and tried to be brief, clear, and, as far as possible, unbiased. When I finished, I was the object of many firm hand-shakes, expressions of gratitude, and other marks of satisfaction.

At supper I was initiated into regimental events. The news of the upheaval had been taken quietly, chiefly because they were far from the centre of things, possessed no newspapers of their own, and got only very belated reports of events. People here really lived on rumours. A council of soldiers' deputies had also been established in my regiment, at the head of which was a Tatar, Bekirov by name. Bekirov's election to this high office was remarkable, because in the regiment, which numbered twelve thousand men, there were not more than a thousand Tatars. In spite of this, an illiterate Tatar had been appointed to this responsible post. In civil life, Bekirov was a mountain guide in the Crimea, and he had never been to the Front. He had formerly

served as an orderly in the regimental office, where no one had ever thought very highly of him. But now, as ruler over thousands of soldiers, he wore a special new uniform, decked his fingers with gold rings, and had a mistress from among the local social lights. . . .

This Soldiers' Council had in the beginning behaved with moderation, but in course of time had become bolder and bolder, and now interfered in all regimental affairs. Every regimental order had to be approved by it. The soldiers' councils felt themselves stronger every day, for the regimental authorities, from the commander downwards, showed increasing complacency towards them, and even tried to worm their way into their favour.

The general temper of the officers was very depressed; most of them were openly opposed to what had happened. But unfortunately a few of the younger generation had not hesitated to make their obeisance to the new powers.

In the evening I visited the only club that existed in the town. There, in a fairly large room, wreathed in smoke, I saw several officers and local dignitaries, such as the postmaster, the justice of the peace, and the doctor, solemnly playing cards. In the next room was a billiard table covered with the remains of a once-green cloth. Beside this miserable piece of furniture stood two very young lieutenants and two heavily made-up women. One of the latter, a passably pretty Jewess, with a sensual mouth and dark

eyes, was wearing a red dress and gloves of the same colour. The lieutenants were making by no means equivocal jokes, to the great joy of their lady friends. Captain Bukharin, who had taken me to the club, nudged me lightly in the ribs and whispered:

“Just see that. These are our ladies. Where there are no fish, the crab will pass as a fish, says a Russian proverb!” We left the lieutenants to their flirtation, and went to the buffet, where we spent the rest of the evening over a bottle of wretched wine.

Next forenoon my orderly announced: “Your Honour, the president of the Soldiers’ Council has called to see you.”

I went into the ante-room. Before me stood a well dressed Tatar with the typical face of a Crimean guide. The index finger of his right hand was adorned with a ring set with a four-carat diamond.

“Good day, what do you wish?”

“I wish you good health, Lieutenant,” said the honourable President, and held out his hand.

I examined him with a penetrating glance, and calmly put my hands in my trouser pockets. His hand remained in the air, and suddenly disappeared. He was extremely confused and mumbled:

“Yes, really. . . . Pardon me for having bothered you. . . . We should be so glad to hear what is happening in Petersburg.”

“I understand that, but who are ‘we’?”

“My comrades and I, the delegates.”

“Very well, come to my hotel in an hour. I shall

then tell you all my experiences in these unforgettable days. In the meantime I have the honour to bid you good day."

Bekirov tried to overwhelm me with exaggerated expressions of gratitude, but I cut him short with: "In an hour, then," and turned away, leaving him standing there.

An hour later my "guests of honour" appeared. Bekirov was accompanied by two soldiers, and, to my no small surprise, a person in a flaming red dress, in whom I recognized the young Jewess of the billiard-room. I politely asked her the reason for her appearance.

"I am the representative of the Workers' Council," was her dignified reply.

With a gesture I invited my visitors to take a seat, and then proceeded to give them a clear and honest description of my experiences of the last three weeks, naturally omitting all that concerned Tsarskoe Selo. In plain words I gave the delegates to understand that all that had occurred was a misfortune for our country, and that if things went on as they were doing, we must inevitably lose the war. The discipline of the Army was undermined, and only a dictatorship for the duration of the war could restore order. I also touched lightly upon the strikingly large part played by the Jews in the Revolution. The lady in the red blouse bit her lips when I spoke about her co-religionists, and at last jumped from her chair and said:

" You are now speaking of special questions which are no concern of mine."

With these words she bowed with a slight inclination of her head and vanished from the room.

I felt a great relief when she had gone, and went on with my narrative. Two long hours our conversation lasted, until I became quite hoarse; then I asked my audience to excuse me, put on my cap, and went out with them.

Bekirov thanked me in exaggerated terms as on the first occasion, nor were his comrades behind him in fervour.

" The one authority for the moment is the Provisional Government," I said finally, " and we must support it to the full extent of our powers; otherwise we shall very quickly arrive at the worst form of anarchy. You have no reason to thank me; it has given me pleasure to be able to give you interesting news. . . . Yes, the times are now very uncertain . . . first you thank a man and then you have him arrested. Can you give me a guarantee that I will not be arrested? "

The comrades were taken aback by my concluding remark. " But no . . . how can you say such a thing? " they murmured.

" Well, do not forget what I have said to you, and God grant that my suspicions are not confirmed! Good night."

With these words I took leave of the delegates, and went to the club to kill the rest of the evening.

Hardly had I entered the card-room when Colonel B. of the twelfth Starodubov Regiment came up to me. " You are to go home immediately, Lieutenant. The regimental commander has ordered your arrest."

" Or, more correctly, the Council of Soldiers' Deputies, Colonel," I rejoined.

The Colonel could only make a despairing gesture. I went home through the dark and narrow streets. I opened the door of my room, lit a candle, and by its flickering light convinced myself that my four automatic pistols lay under the pillows loaded, and that the fifth was in my pocket.

The wooden steps creaked under the tread of heavy service boots.

" Back! I am in command here."

A threatening murmur was the answer. Someone knocked loudly on the door.

" Why use violence? I will open it," I answered indifferently, and opened the door.

Ensign R., who was on guard that day, stepped into the room, in active service equipment. He saluted and said:

" You are arrested on the order of the deputy regimental commander."

" Very good," I answered, and added in a whisper: " I know very well why."

The ensign turned and went into the passage. I took my stand in the door, and made up my mind not to let anyone else into the room.

" You know why you are arrested, do you then? "

asked a voice from the darkness of the passage. I recognized the speaker as one of the soldiers who had visited me as a delegate.

"No, I don't know," I answered curtly.

"What do you mean? You have just said . . ."

"And I repeat once more that I do not know. Perhaps because I asked you to support the Provisional Government?"

This quiet and ironical remark of mine confused him. A soldier with a gun planted himself by the door into my room, while some others held the passage

"Good night, gentlemen," I said, and shut the door, locking and bolting it.

Voces rang out on the steps:

"One sentry is too few. We must also station sentries under the windows. In the time of the old regime we were not treated like this. There was no confinement to quarters of this kind!"

"I know quite well what I have to do Clear out, all of you," ordered the ensign.

About eleven a.m. a knock sounded on my door. In the opening appeared the grinning face of Bekirov, who told me in a friendly tone that I was to appear before the committee of inquiry immediately. I thanked him for his kind news, and reminded him that my suspicions had been verified, and that I had actually been arrested. He made no reply, and disappeared again. About one o'clock the new officer on duty, Lieutenant V—skii arrived, and told me I must go before the committee of inquiry.

We went out, and came to a little house not far from the hotel, which was flying a red flag. We went through a narrow passage into a little room; in it the Court was to pass sentence on me. In the left-hand corner three soldiers lounged, half sitting and half lying, cigarettes in their mouths. Two of them I knew already: they were my erstwhile "guests of honour." A military doctor appeared to be acting as the president of this singular court. Beside him sat a woman of masculine type, wearing a field-grey jacket of military cut. To the left of the doctor I saw a dignified, grey-bearded old man in magistrate's robes; he was, as I discovered later, the justice of the peace of the town. In the right-hand corner sat two officers, Colonel B. of the twelfth Starodubov Dragoon Regiment, and Colonel K. of the twelfth Ulan Regiment. Several other soldiers and civilians were standing about, apparently as curious spectators.

I politely saluted the two colonels and the justice of the peace, offered my hand carelessly to the doctor, and threw a casual good day to the soldiers. Then I asked Colonel B., as the superior in rank, for permission to sit down.

"What can I do for you?" I asked the doctor in a loud clear voice.

"Well, really . . . it would interest us very much to hear what you reported in the club about events in Petersburg."

I wanted to answer that it was no business of his

what I had said in the club, and that the club was the *sacrum sacrorum* of the officers' corps; but I did not wish to provoke a dispute right at the start, so I said quietly:

"I assure you I make no secret of my story."

"We must first of all, I think, take all particulars about him," said the doctor, turning to the justice of the peace.

The latter seemed to feel somewhat uncomfortable, and merely nodded assent.

At the first glance I had noticed that I had not to do with a professional magistrate, so, to avoid unnecessary questions, I took the initiative myself, and began to tell my story quite simply.

Madame Pavlovskiaia (that was the lady's name), a former school teacher, kept turning over the leaves of her notebook during my speech, and interrupting me continually with all kinds of questions. I talked to her in a very off-hand tone, and forced her to repeat her questions more than once, which she apparently did not like at all. I took no particular care to choose my expressions, and abused to the best of my ability the "comrade soldiers" and "comrade sailors" for the destruction of the Hotel Astoria and the Kronstadt atrocities. The doctor kept silence, the soldier-delegates threw furious glances at me, and at last Madame Pavlovskiaia could contain herself no longer:

"You lay the colours on a little too thick. I cannot conceive that a free people could sink so low."

Then I, too, lost my self-control and interrupted her:

"I am very sorry, Madam, that you were not with us in the Astoria, to be marched off to the Duma half naked in company with a lot of street women! Moreover, I am surprised that you, a woman of forty, with a University education, are not ashamed to ask such absurd questions."

Madame Pavlovskiaia got as red as a turkey cock, for she was not more than six or eight and twenty at the most; my remark about her age took the wind out of her sails. The two colonels and the magistrate could hardly restrain a smile. Soon she rose, begged to be excused, and departed.

I thought that things would now go more smoothly, but this was not the case. The delegates were very angry with me, and, with the co-operation of the doctor, put me through a cross-examination, trying all the time to prove that I had insulted the "heroes of the Revolution." They did not succeed, however, and they then attempted to foist on me the charge of agitation against the Provisional Government. This too was a vain effort. The hearing lasted four solid hours, and ended inconclusively. Then at last one of the delegates said, after turning over the leaves of his notebook:

"Lieutenant, you have expressed yourself to the effect that one or two cavalry regiments would be enough to send the whole crew to the devil?"

I did not let myself be flustered, but answered:



THE TSAR IN CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM II AT REVAL

THE TSAR WITH THE ARCHDUKE ERNST LUDWIG VON HESSE (BROTHER OF THE TSARITSA)

In the uniform of Honorary Colonel of a Russian regiment



"Yes, those were my words. I only meant by them, however, that one or two divisions would have been enough to disperse the mob that was robbing foreign officers, jeering at women, carrying on inquisitions on their own authority, and looking for machine guns in commodes."

The attack was averted, the delegates lapsed into silence, the doctor muttered something into his beard.

At last I was allowed to go home, still escorted by the officer on duty. But the session went on for the rest of the night; the two officers succeeded in exonerating me somewhat, and in the end I was merely sentenced to be reprimanded by the regimental commander for the coarse expressions I had permitted myself to use about the sublime Revolution and its heroes. Further, I was not assigned to any unit for the moment, because it was feared I should prove a "disintegrating influence" on the men. As a result of this long discussion, my confinement was prolonged for another twenty hours; on my release, I was given an enthusiastic welcome by practically the whole officers' corps.

One day my favourite batman, Khalil, a Tatar, came to me from the Crimea. I welcomed him as if he had been my best friend. Even now, in a foreign land, I often think with emotion of this model of a soldier, who remained true to the dictates of military discipline. In those days, as I sat solitary in my room, sunk in grave and gloomy thoughts, it

was he who comforted me and best understood my mental state. He wept like a child when I described to him what had happened at Tsarskoe Selo, and it cost me a lot of trouble to prevent him from settling the score with Bekirov, the original cause of my arrest. He swore that he would avenge me sooner or later, and he actually kept this oath.

One morning Khalil, when he brought breakfast to my room, told me in confidence that he had had a talk with his cousin and three of the Tatars whom he knew from having served with them in the division; they were all ready to share in the work of rescuing the Tsaritsa if I would give them the necessary instructions.

I thanked him very warmly for his loyalty and devotion, and asked him to tell his friends that I would unreservedly accept the help offered to me, as soon as I thought the suitable moment had arrived.

The flooding of the Dnieper, which was particularly threatening that year, among other things, endangered the house in which I had taken rooms, and I was obliged to move. I went to live with Ensign G., a jolly and splendid fellow. He was a brave and resolute character, and, what was the main thing, of my way of thinking. Our house soon got the nickname of the "club of the dark powers," and, indeed, all the officers who were inspired by a spirit of revolt against the existing regime foregathered there.

About the middle of April, I learned from the

regimental adjutant that it was intended to dispatch to Sevastopol', under the direction of Tatar guides, a horse transport for the artillery section of the Second Marine Infantry Division. I begged the adjutant to help me to get appointed to the command of this transport, and the commander immediately agreed. I therefore took over the transport, and marched out of Neogeorgievsk with my column to the station at Pavlysh, where we entrained.

The whole journey from Pavlysh to Sevastopol' went smoothly. Every morning I saluted the men drawn up in line, and always received the answer: "We wish you good health, Your Honour." The voices of one or two young Tatars addressing me as "Lieutenant" were lost in the general form of greeting. On the way we met units coming from the Front, who gave themselves out as on leave; but in reality most of them were deserters. These "heroes" looked with amazement at the discipline which prevailed among us, and stared at me and my men as if we had been wild beasts.

Sevastopol' made a melancholy impression on me. Life in the town suggested anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. The marine officers went about dejectedly without their epaulettes; these had been removed at the order of the commander of the fleet, Admiral Kolchak.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONSPIRACY BEGINS

ONE day towards the end of May, as I was sitting at lunch in the club at Novogeorgievsk, I suddenly heard the voice of a young ensign addressing me:

“I had quite forgotten, Lieutenant, to give you a message from Madame Den.”

“What’s that you say? Where is she then? Where did you see her?”

Then the ensign told me that he had been staying at Kremenchug with Madame Den’s mother, who owned an estate near the town. He had talked to the old lady about garrison life, and had mentioned a certain Lieutenant Markov, who had been arrested immediately after his arrival at Novogeorgievsk. When the old lady heard my name, she asked the ensign to invite me to visit her estate. She had just come back from Petersburg, where her daughter had told her a lot about me.

Next morning I eagerly mounted my horse and rode with Khalil to Beletskovka, which is twenty-five versts from Novogeorgievsk. When I arrived I was welcomed like an old acquaintance and friend both by Ekaterina Leonidovna and her mother, Mariia

Karlovna Khorwat, *née* a Baroness Pillar von Pilchau. I now heard all the details of her visit to Petersburg. Madame Den had been kept in the Palace with the Imperial Family up to 20th March, and had then been removed from Tsarskoe Selo, in company with Madame Vyrubova. The two young ladies were taken to Petersburg, and placed in custody in a damp, unheated room in the Ministry of Justice. At the end of three days Madame Den was released, but the unfortunate Anna Alexandrovna Vyrubova was interned in the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul.

Madame Den had told her mother of my two visits to the Palace, and said that the Empress often recalled her "little Markov," and was always touched at the thought of how I had come to offer her my services. Ekaterina Leonidovna also told me that the Imperial Family, as before, were kept under the strictest surveillance in the Alexandrovskii Palace. The first revolutionary governor of the Palace, Kotsebu, who had treated the Imperial Prisoners with loyalty, had been replaced by Colonel Korovichenko. The latter was a personal friend of Kerenskiï, a rough and uncultured person, and under him the position of the Imperial Family had become considerably worse. I said to Ekaterina Leonidovna that their position made me very uneasy, as I believed that their remaining longer at Tsarskoe Selo was not without danger. If the Provisional Government was not prepared to allow the Imperial Family to go abroad, I declared, it would be necessary to

rescue them by force. Then I initiated Ekaterina Leonidovna into our plans, and told her that I had succeeded, under the cloak of a band assembling for wining and gambling, in getting together a group of twelve officers who were ready if necessary to sacrifice their lives in Their Majesties' service. It was not for nothing that they bore the name of the "club of the dark powers."

My visit to Beletskovka gave me much food for thought. After mature reflection I decided not to remain longer in the regiment, as there was now no object in doing so. I must go to Petersburg as quickly as possible to have an interview with Madame Den, and find out the real position of the Imperial Family.

So I decided to take leave and go to Odessa, where I hoped to be relieved entirely of military service, and in this way attain complete freedom of movement. My regimental commander, Colonel Popov, gave me three weeks' leave only too gladly, for he was relieved to be rid of an officer who had caused him so much inconvenience and worry. On 1st June I took leave of my comrades, and proceeded to Beletskovka, where I intended to spend one day.

Before I went away, I once again discussed with my fellow-conspirators all the details of our plan for the liberation of the Tsar. We arranged a special secret code, covering addresses, false names, and words with secret meanings. The memory of this group of young people, absolutely devoted to their

Emperor and his family, remains to this day the one bright spot in the drab monotony of my stay at Novogeorgievsk.

In Odessa I met my father, who had had to flee from the Front after the Revolution. He listened with tense interest to my accounts of what I had seen in Petersburg, Tsarskoe Selo, and Novogeorgievsk, and approved my resolution to leave the service.

At this time Odessa was the capital of the revolutionary South. Red flags flew everywhere; the prefect's house was now the headquarters of the local soviets. The same building also housed a mysterious but powerful organization called the "Rumcherod." This "Rumcherod" consisted of delegates of the Army of the Rumanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet, and representatives of the Odessa Soviet. It was all-powerful, and compared to it the chief in command of the Odessa military area was a mere figure-head, for he was entirely controlled by two sailor-delegates of the "Rumcherod." Instead of the excellent policemen, self-important half-grown secondary school boys with rifles slung on their shoulders strutted about the streets.

The life of the town pulsated with Southern verve. At every turn you found assemblies and "meetings." Words like "comrade" or "citizen comrade" had become fashionable and were flying about everywhere. The chief street, the Deribassovskaia, and all the boulevards were packed with soldiers and sailors, strutting about with their ladies on their arm

and vieing with each other in crunching sunflower seeds. Cynical jokes and coarse oaths were the order of the day. The Revolution had also had its influence on the employees of the best-known coffee-houses in Odessa, where the waiters openly gave expression to their displeasure when addressed, according to the old custom, as "chelovek."¹

A few days after my arrival, I sent a petition to the town commandant asking that I should be medically examined with the object of being discharged from military service. My petition was granted, and I was ordered to proceed to a military hospital for observation. But I knew how to make use of my friends, and I spent the entire time at home, although registered as being at the hospital. The official medical examination was fixed for 23rd June, and I awaited this day with feverish impatience, as all my future plans depended on this decision.

During my stay, Odessa had the pleasure of receiving a "high visitor," no less than Kerenskiĭ, the new Minister of War, in person. The excited citizens and citizenesses of Odessa welcomed their new idol with enthusiasm. In a get-up, half military and half that of a chauffeur, he presented an astounding appearance. None the less, he was buried in roses, borne shoulder-high through the streets, and almost torn in pieces by his female admirers. A crowd numbering several thousand assembled on the square before the Hotel Passage, and called for him until he

¹ Literally, "man."

appeared on the balcony, a red ribbon across his breast, embroidered with the words "Minister of War," a gift from his female admirers.

The 23rd June arrived, and the medical board declared me quite unfit for military service. But before I received my discharge papers, the commandant on his own authority gave me three weeks' leave. I got the necessary documents at the end of June, and, on 1st July, took an express train to Petersburg, where I arrived on the 3rd. I went straight to Madame Den's house, but unluckily she was not there. The servant told me that she had gone for a summer holiday with her little son to Kellomiaki, not far from Terrioki in Finland. But she was expected in Petersburg on business the next day, so I decided to wait for her.

I spent my first day in Petersburg indoors listening to the tales of the friends with whom I was putting up. I was particularly interested in the accounts of the increasing bolshevization of the masses in Petersburg: the entire working class of Petersburg and Kronstadt, as well as almost all the sailors in the Baltic Fleet, openly sympathized with the new gods, Lenin, Trotskiï, and other returned political exiles. How could the Provisional Government have allowed these persons to enter Russia, when they were quite well aware that the German Government had arranged their journey across Germany? The newspapers reported that these revolutionaries had travelled through Germany in sealed coaches. As was

to be expected this group started on seditious propaganda as soon as they arrived: they demanded the immediate termination of the war, a demand which gave greater impetus to the incipient disintegration of the Army.

I had already read in the southern papers about the arrival of these unwelcome guests and the course of their activities; but what came to my ears now in Petersburg surpassed even my worst suspicions. The group called itself officially the "Executive Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of the Bolsheviks." With the support of their adherents in Petersburg these people had taken possession of the palace of the ballet-dancer, Kshesinskaya, and had entrenched themselves strongly there. This palace became the stronghold of the Bolsheviks, and the centre of their propagandist activities. Meetings were held before the building day and night, and from the balcony Lenin and Trotskii addressed "enlightening" speeches to the assembled crowd. They openly demanded the "deepening of the Revolution" by the overthrow of the "bourgeois Provisional Government," which had sold itself to the Entente, and was shedding the blood of the workers and peasants for the benefit of world capitalism.

The slogans flung by the Bolsheviks to the masses were brief, clear, and definite: "Down with the war! Peace without annexations or indemnities! Peace in the cabins and war in the palaces! The

soil for the working people! Steal what was stolen from you!"

These people employed simple methods: they forged ahead without sentimentality or phrase-making. A doctrine which declared the verbs "rob, take, seize" to be legal, and which abolished all private property without more ado, inevitably exercised a very strong influence on the simple, anarchistic Russian mind. Soldiers and workmen flocked to Kshesinskaia's palace, and listened open-mouthed to these new and unprecedented revelations. To the Kronstadt sailors, the mass-murderers of the officers of the Baltic Fleet, Lenin gave the honorary title of the "pride and jewel of the Russian Revolution" in return for their "heroic deed." This "pride and jewel" immediately became Lenin's most faithful guard against all the attacks of the Provisional Government.

The Bolshevik newspaper, which bore the name *Pravda*, circulated unchecked to the number of several thousand copies among the workers and in the barracks. The Petrograd Soviet and its organ, *Izvestiia*, became more radical every day; feeling visibly grew more and more strained and there was thunder in the air.

On 4th July I again called on Madame Den, and this time I found her in. She had been expecting me since the morning she returned from Finland. My meeting with Madame Den reopened the old wounds: I saw once again the sad face of the Em-

press; I heard her soft melodious voice saying: "Do not give up, do not lose courage. . . . God is merciful." In my eyes Madame Den was of that company which was dearer to me than my life, for whose sake I had left solitary a mother I have not seen since January 1917. It is now more than eleven years since I last saw my mother, and who knows if I shall ever see her again. From that 4th of March which was such an important date in my life, my motto has been: "For those who are dear to us." I can say with a good conscience that from that day I never swerved from that motto, and that I did all in my power to serve Their Majesties.

Madame Den now told me all the happenings in the Palace since my departure from Tsarskoe Selo. How humiliated and disgusted I was to think that there were more than sixty military hospitals in Tsarskoe Selo mainly occupied by convalescent officers belonging to the finest regiments in the Russian Imperial Army! Who, if not these officers, might have been expected to stand like men at their Emperor's side? Moreover, I was to learn that these healthy men lay in bed during the Revolution, gave themselves out as mortally ill, and had themselves all bandaged up, partly to protect themselves against the excesses of the soldiers who had lost their heads completely, but partly also to avoid the duty of coming to the aid of Her Majesty and the Imperial Family. The Tsaritsa, however, inquired several times a day, up to the time of her arrest, after the

health of these malingeringers, and sent flowers to them from the Palace.

The behaviour of the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimorovich, who immediately went over to the revolutionaries with his marines, hurt the Tsar so much that he refused to wear his favourite naval uniform again. The behaviour of the imperial entourage was also most revolting: N. P. Sablin, Their Majesties' favourite adjutant, was in Petersburg at the beginning of the Revolution, and, although imperial favours had been lavished on him more generously than on anyone else, he never even thought it necessary to visit the Empress at Tsarskoe Selo.

These blows of fate and all this treachery were borne by the Imperial Family with true Christian meekness. The Palace was populated with young ensigns, mostly loafing secondary schoolboys. The sons of village schoolmasters, post office officials, doctors, and other representatives of our so-called "intelligentsia," took the liberty of curtly addressing the Emperor as "Colonel." The other members of the Imperial House were also treated rudely and maliciously. The soldiers, for their part, were not behind their superiors, and among their other offences had the impudence to use obscene expressions in the presence of the Grand Duchesses.

On 21st March Kerenskiⁱⁱ suddenly appeared at the Palace, and told Madame Den that he intended to take her and Madame Vyrubova, who had only just got up, to Petersburg with him. "When we get

there, we'll see what we'll do with you," he added viciously.

After a sad parting from Their Majesties and the children, Madame Den and Madame Vyrubova left the Palace and were taken to Petersburg in Kerenskiĭ's train. They were conveyed to the Ministry of Justice, and locked into a room on the third storey, in which two dirty couches were at their disposal. Outside the door was posted a ragged soldier, begrimed with dirt, a typical representative of the "glorious Revolutionary Army."

Madame Den spent only two days there as she was set free on the third. The unfortunate Madame Vyrubova, however, was first taken to the Duma, then to the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, where she was to pass two months of inhuman misery in the Trubetskoĭ bastion.

Almost simultaneously with the arrest of the two ladies, Kotsebu, the Governor of the Palace at Tsarskoe, was removed from office and replaced by Korovichenko. According to Madame Den's description, Korovichenko was a beast in human shape, who gave the soldiers an absolutely free hand, and who lost no opportunity to treat the unfortunate martyrs with ever-increasing disrespect. Luckily, he was soon recalled and appointed commander-in-chief of the Kazan military area. His position in the Palace was then taken over by a certain Colonel Kobylinskiĭ, who was more friendly disposed to Their Majesties.

I listened to Madame Den's account, bereft of

speech. If anyone else had told me, I would not have believed a word of it. Aghast, I turned to her and said:

"Iul'ia Alexandrovna, for God's sake, tell me—can things go on like this? Their Majesties must be saved from this monstrous position and be enabled to flee abroad."

Instead of answering, Madame Den handed me a letter from the Empress to herself, which had by accident escaped the curious fingers of the censorship. It was the Empress's answer to a letter in which Madame Den had asked her whether she would agree to go to Italy with her family. The Empress now wrote: "He would be a scoundrel who would leave his country at such a fateful time. They can do what they like with us; they can throw us into the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, but we will not leave Russia in any circumstances."

These words were written by a woman whom millions branded as a "German" and a spy, and in whom they professed to see the evil genius of the Tsar. After I had read the letter, I said to Madame Den that this time I did not intend to obey the will of the Empress, otherwise so sacred to me; if danger threatened Their Majesties, it would be a crime to follow the imperial wishes and do nothing to rescue the Imperial Family. I then revealed my plans to Madame Den, and told her of the steps already taken, the establishing of a band of trustworthy and loyal officers in Novogeorgievsk.

Madame Den listened with great interest, and thanked me for my zeal. To my great joy, she then told me that the Empress often recalled me, and set great store by my coming at a time when she saw nothing around her but cowardice and treachery. The Emperor too had spoken very highly of my readiness to serve them.

Madame Den thereupon invited me to visit her at her country cottage, which pleased me very much. We then went out, as she had some purchases to make. We took the first izvoshchik that came, and drove to the Nevskii Prospekt.

When still some distance away we noticed that something unusual was happening on the Nevskii Prospekt. A huge crowd was pushing across the bridge towards the Gostinnyi Dvor. Our driver explained: "In the night the 'Levorution' began again, lady. . . . They say that the Bolsheviks are in league with the Germans." The effect of this information was to make Madame Den—alarmed lest the disturbance should spread to the area of the Finnish station—give up her shopping expedition and drive straight to the station. I was unfortunately unable to accompany her, as I had a great deal of urgent business to attend to; but I promised to follow her next day. I parted from her at the bridge and proceeded to the Nevskii on foot.

Carried along by the crowd, without intending it, I arrived at the Nikolaevski station. Beside the Gostinnyi Dvor, I saw a sign that had been familiar



THE TSAR, ON HIS RIGHT THE GRAND DUCHESS TAT'IANA,
ON HIS LEFT THE GRAND DUCHESS OL'GA

In the uniform of their Guards regiments



THE TSAR AND CROWN PRINCE IN RIGA



THE TSAR TALKING TO GENERAL JOFFRE

to me in February and March. In the middle of the Nevskiĭ stood a whole column of motor vans, laden with machine guns and men; the men, sailors and civilians, were armed to the teeth; all sorts of weapons were in evidence, from automatic pistols to officers' swords. On each van stood several speakers who were shouting furiously at the assembled crowd. Huge placards announced: "Down with the Ministers! Down with the capitalists! Long live the Workers' and Soldiers' Council! Down with the Provisional Government, which has sold itself to foreign capital! Down with the war! We want peace without annexations and indemnities! The soil for those that work it!"

Suddenly, from the direction of the Liteĭnyĭ Prospekt, a detachment of cavalry appeared. "Cossacks! Cossacks!" shrieked the mob.

The motor vans hooted furiously, and the whole column slowly withdrew. A few shots rang out, the crowd fell into disorder, and ebbed away. Somewhere a machine gun began to rattle. This was the beginning of the first Bolshevik revolution, which was to end with a victory for the Provisional Government. The panic increased and spread rapidly. By evening, there was already a rumour of the bombardment of Petersburg by the Kronstadt siege guns. It was not till nearly morning that things quieted down.

I took advantage of the temporary armistice to hurry to the Finnish station. I drew a breath of relief when I found myself in the train.

CHAPTER 6

MARKOV THE SECOND, INFERNAL MACHINES, AND POISONED DARTS

Now listen to how I became acquainted with Markov II! It happened at Terrioki in Finland, where Madame Den was living in a little cottage in a primeval pine forest.

One evening we were sitting as usual on the sea-shore, when we saw an unknown man with a broad-brimmed straw hat and a cudgel in his hand making his way towards us. The stranger's figure at first inspired little confidence in us; Madame Den rose and went to meet him, and I followed her.

"I wish to speak to Iul'ia Alexandrovna Den," said the unknown gentleman. When he heard that he was addressing the lady in question, he added:

"I come on behalf of . . ." He bent towards Madame Den, and whispered something in her ear.

"Of course, I know; I am very glad to make your acquaintance," said Madame Den. I took a long look at the stranger, and it seemed to me that I had seen him somewhere before.

"Allow me to introduce Lieutenant Markov. He is my friend, and you may speak quite openly before him."

I bowed. The gentleman smiled slightly, looked at me roguishly, and, offering me his hand, said: "My name is also Markov."

And then I recognized who he was. He was Nikolai Evgen'evich Markov, commonly known as Markov II. He had let his beard grow, and thus contrived to disguise himself effectively without any make-up.

He asked me which Markovs I belonged to. I told him that I was the grandson of Z. V. Markov, member of the Duma.

"Then we are related," said Nikolai Evgen'evich, "that's splendid. In future you are my nephew, and you will allow me to call you Serezha."

I agreed willingly, and expressed my pleasure at being able to be useful to him. He declared that for the moment I should play the part of "liaison officer" between him and Madame Den.

After a brief conversation, Markov departed. In this way, Madame Den and I became acquainted with the head of the organization which had made it its mission to protect and free the imprisoned Imperial Family.

God! how many hopes and expectations we entertained at that time, in our confidence in this friend. It seemed to us that our mere brief talk with him had already advanced us half-way towards the liberation of the Emperor and Empress, and even towards the restoration of the monarchy.

Iul'ia Alexandrovna had an ardent belief in this

man. I was still young and lived on her ideas; I blindly obeyed all her orders, and regarded it all as a means towards furthering the welfare and happiness of my idolized Emperor and Empress. I hardly considered whether these beginnings had been sufficiently thought out or whether they could really be of any use. Iul'ia Alexandrovna believed in this man and in his power and energy, and so I made him my ideal. How could I have been critical at that time?

The Bolshevik rising was easily quelled by the Cossacks of the first Don Cossack Regiment, which had remained loyal to the Provisional Government. There had been victims on both sides, but finally Kshesinskaia's palace was cleared of the Bolsheviks, although the leaders, unfortunately, were able to get away—to Kronstadt, according to rumour.

I was at Kellomiaki that day, and so missed the pleasure of seeing the course of the rising with my own eyes. Eyewitnesses later told me that the Cossacks acted with great decision. People were already talking of the necessity "of liquidating the centre of the infection, Kronstadt." But, unfortunately, this never got beyond projects, and the "pride and jewel" were able to remain unscathed in their citadel and continue their defeatist propaganda.

The Bolshevik outbreak and the successful measures taken by the Cossacks must have clearly shown that imbecile of a Prime Minister how to deal with the Bolsheviks and the Russian people who had

broken away from their anchor. But alas! the aim of this person was not the restoration of order but an even greater chaos!

This Kerenskiĭ was nothing but the forerunner of the Bolsheviks, for whom he prepared the way. He declared the Cossacks to be his enemies, and tried to maintain himself with the aid of the Kronstadt sailors, who actually helped him to suppress the attempt of the Cossacks to establish a national Government. Soon afterwards, these same Kronstadt sailors hurled this “Napoleon from Berdichev” from the political tribunal, and kicked him out of the Palace of the Tsars, where he had ostentatiously ensconced himself. Madame Den had gone to Petersburg to send some things to Their Majesties at Tsarskoe Selo, including books and my letters to the Tsaritsa. She came back radiant. She had met Markov II and his energetic fellow-worker, V. P. Sokolov, who played a leading part in the “Union of the Russian People.” Madame Den had been initiated into the details of the counter-revolutionary organization, and seemed to be delighted with all she had heard.

Markov II lived not far from us: he was at a summer resort in the neighbourhood of Kanerva, which was buried in the forest and a long distance from the railway. He frequently, however, went to Petersburg on the business of the organization, risking his life every time. Fortunately, no one recognized him, not even those who knew him best, if they

met him accidentally on the street. Markov and his fellow-conspirators were attempting secretly to mobilize all who remained loyal to their oath, and were striving for the restoration of the monarchy. A military section had been established, which registered the officers and canvassed for recruits. The whole organization was built up on the strictest conspiracy system, the "three system," the essence of which was that each member was acquainted with only three other members. This method, which was the invention of the terrorists, was expected to create a powerful machine which would be able to carry out a revolution in Petersburg, free the Tsar, and set him once more on the throne of his fathers. In case the Tsar should refuse to take over the Government again, the crown was to be offered to the Heir Apparent.

Markov II considered the Bolshevik rising as a favourable circumstance, according to the proverb "the worse it is the better it will be." His view was that we should support the Bolsheviks, and help them to overthrow the Provisional Government, in order that they might be overthrown in their turn. For this reason Markov II at that time introduced many of his adherents into the Bolshevik organizations. His aim was to have his people in all party and non-party organizations, in order always to have immediate first-hand information and be well posted up in events.

Madame Den had a general impression that the

scheme was in full swing and steadily expanding. What chiefly kept her mind at peace was the conviction that for the moment there was no cause for alarm, and that no danger threatened the Emperor and his family.

It was clear from Madame Den's report that the Bolsheviks who were in hiding in Kronstadt were still active, and that a second outbreak might be expected in the near future. That was also to be the longed-for moment when the old Imperial Eagle would again spread its mighty arms over unhappy Russia! I was overjoyed to know that the organization was expanding and was so powerful, and that an imminent and splendid triumph was before us!

A few days later I visited Markov II in his summer retreat, and received a more than friendly welcome. We spent several hours talking over the samovar in the cool shade of the pinewood. He told me everything I had already heard from Madame Den, but in fuller detail. When the conversation touched upon the Imperial Family, I mentioned my doubts about their remaining longer at Tsarskoe, saying that the Palace Guard was extremely untrustworthy, and that, moreover, the town itself was packed with demoralized soldiers belonging to the reserve rifle brigades. For these reasons, I considered that it was dangerous for the Tsar and Tsaritsa to remain there any longer, and voted for their being removed by force.

"But how do you imagine it would be possible to

rescue Their Majesties from Tsarskoe?" asked Markov II.

I replied that it could most easily be accomplished by a bold stroke. Then the Imperial Family could be removed in disguise to Finland, and from there to Sweden. I also told Markov II of my organization in Novogeorgievsk, saying that I had twelve trustworthy officers and some soldiers there, who would come at my call, and that I had also a fully worked-out plan for rescuing the Tsar and his family.

A group of thirty officers, prepared to dare all, should be formed in Petersburg; my idea was that this should include my twelve friends from Novogeorgievsk. This group should be provided with civilian clothes and papers in perfect order; in addition, seven picked and extremely efficient officers should receive suitable papers for every member of the Imperial Family. All these conspirators should be equipped with repeaters and four pounds each of trinitrotoluol cartridges, so that the group as a whole would be carrying three pud of highly effective explosives. I also thought of having printed in a clandestine printing-press several hundred handbills of a radical-anarchist character, to the effect that the Imperial Family had been sentenced to death by a fighting group of anarchist-terrorists. When all these preparations were completed, a sham attack on the Palace should be carried out in the following manner.

I counted on being able to bring over to our side

the Palace servants, whom I believed to have remained absolutely loyal. The servants would inform the Tsar and his family of the exact day and hour fixed for the attack. It would not be difficult to deal with the outer guards: my idea was to remove them all by the help of air-guns with poisoned darts. Then a way would have to be forced into the Palace. It would not be necessary to bring disguises along, as the Emperor had plenty of civilian clothes. He would only have to shave off his beard to make it certain that no one would recognize him.

As soon as the whole Imperial Family had left the Palace, the explosives brought by the attackers should be heaped up under the piano in the Green Drawing-room and provided with a three-minute time fuse. Several motor cars with trustworthy drivers should be in readiness in the side alleys around the Palace.

I was counting on the terrible panic which was bound to occur after the explosion in patriarchal Tsarskoe Selo. It was hardly likely that a pursuit would rapidly be organized in the ensuing disorder, all the more so because the misleading handbills would be discovered everywhere in the neighbourhood of the Palace. Murder of the Imperial Family by a group of anarchist-terrorists—that sounded plausible enough!

In the meantime, we could take the fugitives to a safe refuge, previously arranged, and conceal them there. If the Tsar refused to leave Russia, Their

Majesties need not be conveyed to Finland or Sweden, but be hidden, separately of course, in the remote villages of North Russia, where one could be certain that no spy would track them down, and where they could tranquilly await the future course of events.

Markov II listened attentively to my plans and then said:

"That is, alas, quite impossible, my friend. We have no right to expose Their Majesties to such a risk, and, besides, the whole plan is fantastic. You are still young, and that gives you hope and assurance that all this could easily be done. But I tell you, we must attack the business quite differently. I am devoting much thought to the matter, believe me, and you need not feel at all anxious."

After this speech, there was nothing for me to do but declare that I looked upon him as the head of the organization, and that I placed myself at his entire disposal, and would obey his instructions.

At the end of our conversation, Markov II several times said emphatically that his one mission in life was to serve and help the Emperor and the Heir Apparent. In the evening I returned to Kellomiaki on foot through the forest, Markov II accompanying me for a considerable distance. When I parted from him I was enchanted by his staunchness and sincerity, and his unshakeable faith in the happy issue of our difficult enterprise. He seemed to me to be no ordinary man; he was a mighty hero, not only in

stature but in mind. How firmly I built on him! I was ready to go through fire for him.

On 15th July I received through Madame Den the Empress's answer to my letter:

"I was deeply touched by your note, and am grateful that you have not forgotten your old chief. I am very sorry that you have had to leave the regiment on account of your health. I often think of the day on which I saw you for the last time. . . . Once again, many thanks. . . . When the weather is not too hot, my health is all that could be desired. We walk for three hours every day. The others work; I sit and read or embroider.

"God protect you!

"With most cordial good wishes from your ex-Ch.
Tsarskoe Selo, 11th July."

This letter had passed the censor, to ensure which the Empress signed it "ex-Ch." (ex-Chief), which she did not do later in non-censored letters.

My leave was over. Much as I regretted it, I had to say good-bye to Madame Den and her little boy Titi, a friend and playfellow of the Tsesarevich. I had become very fond of this lovable lad, who seemed older than his years; we had spent many hours on the beach building sand trenches with lines of communication and parapets. On 18th July I travelled back to Odessa.

There I remained for ten days until at last I obtained from the commandant the papers granting me leave for an indefinite period. This document

was later to play an important part in my life; it read:

" This document was issued on 23rd June to Lieutenant Sergei Vladimirovich Markov by the medical board of the Odessa Military Hospital. The board found the above-named quite unfit for military service and assigns him to the fourth category. Lieutenant Markov is granted leave indefinitely until his regular discharge from the army, and is entitled to reside in all towns in Russia."

The very day on which I received this document, the former commandant was removed from office by the "Rumcherod," and one Riazanov, an old member of the Socialist party, was appointed in his place. Possibly it was this Riazanov's signature which on some later occasions proved of such magical effect.

My wish was realized. I was now free of that military service which formerly I had loved to idolatry, and which had now become so hateful to me. My joy was clouded only by the fact that I should be separated from my dear Khalil for the duration of the war. The poor Tatar wept like a child as he accompanied me to the station. He had to rejoin his reserve regiment, which was stationed in the vicinity of the garrison.

The morning of 31st July found me once again in Petersburg. I went straight to the Governor, to announce my arrival and to get a permit to travel to Finland, as no one was now allowed across the frontier without one. From there I proceeded to the

Finnish Station and managed to catch the crowded train. To my great surprise I found Madame Den in one of the compartments. I was horrified by her appearance; she looked as worn and pale as if she were just recovering from a serious illness.

Unfortunately we could not talk freely in the train; Madame Den merely told me that things were very serious. I saw at once what was the matter, but had no details until we were on our way from the station to the cottage. "They are to be removed from Tsarskoe Selo to-day," said Madame Den in a shaking voice, while tears flowed down her face.

This terrible news was like a blow to me. There had, it is true, been rumours of this for some time, but I had always refused to believe them. Now, however, there was no longer any doubt: the journey was fixed for that night. "Nobody knows where Their Majesties are to be taken nor the reason for this step. They say that they are to be confined in the Ipat'evskii Monastery, but these are mere wild rumours that deserve no belief."

That day, if I remember rightly, Markov II was not to be found at Kanerva. So Madame Den decided to return to Petersburg the same day to wait in her town house for news of the place of exile of the Imperial Family. I accompanied her with the intention of going to Tsarskoe Selo to see Their Majesties once more before their departure. According to Madame Den they were not to start until 1 a.m. I was in Tsarskoe Selo by 11 p.m.

With a heavy heart I walked along the quiet, sleepy streets, hardly meeting a soul. What a contrast between the quiet of the town and the confusion in the station! Rough, swearing soldiers had taken possession of the station, and the once so charming buildings were now the rendezvous of them and their "ladies," mostly cooks and servant girls from the town. As I got nearer the Palace, the streets became more and more animated. I could not get very near, as the Palace was surrounded by a strong military force. So I stood at my post of observation until six in the morning without seeing anything. Then several closed cars shot past me, escorted by horsemen of the third Baltic Cavalry Regiment. I saw several men wiping the tears from their eyes. Many women sobbed aloud.

CHAPTER 7

CONSPIRATORS' CONFERENCES

WE were unable to discover the exact destination of the Imperial Family until 6th August, when we heard that Their Majesties had safely arrived in Tobol'sk. Just why Tobol'sk had been chosen seemed inexplicable; I, however, believe that Kerenskiĭ, who was then in power, had a finger in the pie. In order to revive the filthy, lying stories connected with the name of Rasputin, which had caused such resentment in Russia, he had conceived the idea of sending the Emperor and Empress to Tobol'sk, Rasputin's native district. Kerenskiĭ both wished to hurt the Empress and also to make it appear that she herself had chosen Tobol'sk as their place of exile. Rasputin had been the good genius of her sick son, which made this supposed wish of hers as plausible as it was compromising. I repeat that this is a mere personal conjecture of mine, but I do not think that I am wrong.

I saw Markov II for the second time two days after I had received the news of the transference of the Imperial Family to Tobol'sk. I found him profoundly disturbed by what had happened. We

spoke chiefly about Colonel Kobylinskiĭ, who had gone with Their Majesties and who was in command of their guards; these, as we knew, were made up of soldiers of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Rifle Regiments. The fate of the Imperial Family was practically in Kobylinskiĭ's hands, since Kerenskiĭ had given him unlimited authority. In addition to Kobylinskiĭ, one Makarov had also gone to Tobol'sk as the commissary of the Provisional Government. Of the Imperial suite, the following persons had accompanied their Emperor and Empress into exile: Court-Marshall Prince Dolgorukiĭ, General Tatishchev, Dr. Botkin, the tutor to the Heir Apparent, M. Gilliard, Count Hendrikova, a lady-in-waiting, and the Court-reader, Mademoiselle Schneider.

I knew Colonel Kobylinskiĭ slightly, as we had shared a room for a week in the Lianozova military hospital, where I had been in the September and November of 1916. Kobylinskiĭ had made a very favourable impression on me; but I had no idea of his political views. Which of us officers had troubled about such questions before the Revolution? He was a brave, quiet man; the only thing which had drawn our attention to him in the hospital was his intimacy with our young nurse, Klavdiia Mikhaĭlovna Bitner, who had now followed him to Tobol'sk.

Markov II insisted that we must become better acquainted with Colonel Kobylinskiĭ's real attitude. I do not know whether he had taken any steps to accomplish this; but it is certain that in February,



THE TSARITSA

In the uniform of her regiment of Ulan Life Guards



TSAR NIKOLAI II

when I was in Petersburg for the second time, we knew nothing definite about the Colonel.

At the beginning of August, I moved and went to stay with a fellow-officer, A. K. Reshko, who owned the former palace of the Grand Duke Alexei Alexandrovich. My rooms were in the old quarters of his entourage, and looked out on the English Prospekt. At this time Reshko was away and I was quite alone in the house. On one occasion, Madame Vyrubova invited Madame Den and myself to supper at her brother-in-law's, Baron Pistolkors. We found a large party there, mostly men, among whom the military element predominated. The whole party was very gay and jolly; a lot of English and French was spoken. Madame Vyrubova only appeared at supper. This martyr on crutches, in her modest dark dress, with a dead-white face and the scar of a blow from a rifle-butt on her forehead, seemed very incongruous in this noisy and exuberant crowd. Her great violet eyes gazed at the company, eloquent, bright, and melancholy.

Everyone gathered about the round table, spread with all sorts of dainty food, and wine and spirits of home and foreign origin. The general talk was of a frivolous nature; when anyone touched on a political subject, he was at once asked to stop, and not damp the spirits of the party. No one thought of the unfortunate prisoners of Tobol'sk!

As I was escorting Madame Den home, I said how untimely such entertainments were; she replied

that it was always like that in that house. The parties of the mine-owner, Mantashev, who lived on the floor above Baron Pistolkors, at which very distinguished persons were present, often lasted till dawn. It was thus that high society in Petersburg lived and enjoyed itself in these fateful days!

Externally, the town had at first changed very little, except that it became dirtier. But very soon the whole of Petersburg was attacked by "poster mania." The houses were pasted over, up to the third storey, with propagandist party posters of all sizes and colours, and this madness went on spreading.

The shops were doing good business; prices soared aloft, not daily but hourly. An enormous number of new gambling dens sprang up, where immense sums changed hands. The restaurants were packed, and wine, mostly imported, flowed freely. Money began to lose all value, and even the appearance of new thousand-rouble notes, adorned with a picture of the Duma, could not confirm public faith in the stability of the currency. Speculation in currency appeared on the horizon, and began immediately to flourish and exercise its baleful effects all over Russia.

Conditions at the Front were pitiable. The initiative of the Army was broken, and the enemy fleet was able to infest our coasts with impunity, meeting with no serious opposition. In August the Germans succeeded in capturing the Gulf of Riga. The Eleventh Army under Radko Dimitriev was

undermined by Bolshevik agitators who had hurried from Petersburg, so that the Front was broken through at Riga after a brief resistance, the town itself was held by enemy troops, and our fleet driven from the Gulf, the armoured cruiser "Slava" being sunk in the course of the action.

On the northern front and, indeed, everywhere else, collapse threatened, and was only staved off for the moment by the help of newly created units. These consisted of the best elements in the army, often entirely officers, and were called "shock troops." The idea of creating units of this kind originated with General Kornilov, and was first put into practice by him in the Eighth Army.

Thus one part of the army was expected to exert itself to the utmost, while the rest were free to crunch sunflower seeds and look calmly on while their comrades shed their life's blood in an unequal struggle. The flower of the Russian officers sacrificed their young lives, while the soldiers held meetings and passed resolutions on whether they should go to the Front or not.

About this time I heard in Petersburg a soldier-orator shouting in a meeting: "The officers receive pay, so they have something to fight for. But we, comrades, only get boiling water and not always that. The officers suck our blood, so why should we fight?"

In the meantime, on Markov's instructions, I had enrolled myself in various organizations, becoming

in this way a member of the Association of Officers of the Army and Navy, the Association of the Knights of St. George, the Military League of the Association for Military Duty, and the Democratic-Republican Centre. The secretary of the last organization inquired who I was, shook me laughingly by the hand, and said:

“Just wait, Lieutenant, soon our turn will come and we’ll be rejoicing. It will not be long before we are singing ‘God save the Tsar’ again.”

At the time of the Kornilov rising, there were in Petersburg fifty organizations and groups which were all inspired by the same sentiments, and differed only in trifling details. In the Hotel Astoria alone—it had been restored to some extent—there were to my knowledge five different groups of officers who were all afraid of each other or at least regarded each other with suspicion. Nevertheless, they tried to form an alliance which was all the more easy in that the various organizations had their headquarters in the same corridor of the hotel. The young officers were enthusiastic about all the mystery-mongering, the passwords, signs, and other paraphernalia of conspiracy, but had no idea of the technical side of such activities. These officers probably owed their lives to this incredible muddle, when the Kornilov rising collapsed and the furious Kerenskii ordered innumerable arrests. For even the Minister’s spies themselves, who had mixed with the officers, got entangled in the web of these organizations and lost all per-

spective. This chaos and the fact that every group, even the smallest, tried to snatch the leadership, were undoubtedly to blame for the failure of the rising engineered by Kornilov.

For in August things were just the same as they had been in March. In March the officers' corps, properly organized, could have suppressed the revolutionary movement; it would have been possible to arrest the leaders, the Provisional Committee of the Duma, and so overthrow the whole revolution. So later, in August, the officers could have got rid of Kerenskiĭ and with him overthrown the entire new regime if there had not been a complete lack of any rational organization.

I remember an evening at the Astoria to which Madame Den and I had been invited by an acquaintance. Many of our allies were present. The Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich appeared, in the uniform of the Ismaĭlovskii Guards Regiment, and I had the honour of being presented to him. The Grand Duke, an amiable and affable gentleman, was keenly interested in everyone who was sincerely concerned about the fate of unhappy Russia, but he took no part in the plots, nor was he a member of any of the organizations.

At one point we were all sitting talking to a General Staff Officer, when he was called to the telephone; his friend, General Staff Captain S., told us that Kerenskiĭ was at that moment quite alone in his great house. With the exception of a servant or two,

there was no one with him, and if we liked it would be easy. . . . We all understood what was meant by "easy." But such a course of action, simple as it might seem, nevertheless demanded a certain amount of preparation, and so we could do nothing.

Not only Kerenskiĭ but Lenin and Trotskii as well could have been removed quite often. The latter, when they made their speeches from the balcony of Kshesinskaia's Palace, were almost totally unprotected. Unfortunately none of these opportunities was taken, and so to-day part of this crowd of gallows-birds are firmly entrenched in the Kremlin, where for years they have mocked at our stupidity, while the others live merry and carefree in the hotels of Prague, Paris, and London, wallowing in memories of days gone by, and solacing their futile *émigré* lives with reminiscences.

Markov II had a secret meeting-place on the Nevskiĭ on the premises of a commercial company. There all the members of our organization used to meet under the guise of merchants discussing their business affairs. There I made the acquaintance of Markov's right-hand man, Viktor Pavlovich Sokolov. The impression he made on me was not very favourable: his appearance was not attractive, for he was deformed; his little malicious eyes and his way of speaking were extremely unsympathetic. He was not particularly shrewd nor was he intelligent. His most marked characteristics were self-love and hatred for all his fellow-men, traits often found in those whom

nature has dealt with as a stepmother. The perpetual business which prevailed in this place gave the impression that the organization was working with the greatest energy, and hourly increasing both in membership and importance.

On 20th August the news spread that the Chief Procurator and Prime Minister, V. N. L'vov, had sent an ultimatum from headquarters to Kerenskiĭ; Kerenskiĭ had refused to accept the ultimatum and had ordered L'vov's arrest. The general atmosphere in Petersburg became very strained as a result of these occurrences; the newspapers were literally torn from the hands of the newsboys.

On the 27th it became known that it had been proposed to General Kornilov that he should resign from his post as Commander-in-Chief. There was a rumour in the town that the third cavalry corps was marching against Petersburg under General Krymov as the advance-guard of the Kornilov troops, to take possession of the capital and overthrow the Provisional Government.

On the morning of the 28th August an announcement by Kornilov was published, which stated that his duty as a soldier and his boundless love for his country would not permit the General to obey the order of the Provisional Government, and retire from his post as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy. Kornilov accused the Provisional Government of lack of understanding, and invited the representatives of the Government to visit him at G.H.Q.,

where a Government for the defence of the country could be formed.

The answer to this democratic effort of Kornilov's to reach an understanding with men of similar views on the Left was short and sharp: Kerenskiĭ, in the name of the Provisional Government, declared Kornilov a traitor to his country, proclaimed an even more drastic state of war in Petersburg, and appointed B. Savinkov Governor-General.

Next day the advance troops of General Krymov appeared in the neighbourhood of Petersburg, but for some unknown reason they did not advance. Kerenskiĭ again sent for the Kronstadt sailors who had been his enemies a little while before, but who were now his confederates against Kornilov. Krymov's advance ended pitifully: his men, influenced partly by propaganda, and partly by the indecision at G.H.Q., began to hold conferences, which ended in fraternization with the revolutionaries from Petersburg. General Krymov proceeded to parley with Kerenskiĭ in the Winter Palace, and committed suicide there in mysterious circumstances. This ended Kornilov's attempt to form a national democratic government in Russia. At the beginning of September he was arrested, and together with General Lukomskiĭ, General Romanovskiĭ and others, was removed to Bykhov, where they were detained in a girls' high school.

Towards the end of August the lady-in-waiting, M. S. Khitrovo, travelled to Tobol'sk, taking with

her, among many other things, a pile of letters for Their Majesties. However, on the day of her arrival at Tobol'sk, she was arrested on the orders of Colonel Kobylinskiĭ and sent back to Petersburg under escort. She had acted very indiscreetly on the journey, and had expressed her sentiments quite openly in letters to her mother, without giving a thought to the censorship, and, moreover, the mother had spoken quite freely in society about her daughter's journey. One of those present, a friend of Kerenskiĭ, immediately told his patron everything; the Minister communicated to Tobol'sk orders which led to her arrest. Mademoiselle Khitrovo's journey had sad results for Their Majesties: the commissary Makarov, who had always treated the Imperial Family very loyally, was replaced by a certain Pankratov, to whom was assigned an ensign, Nikol'skiĭ by name. Mademoiselle Khitrovo was set free after her arrival in Petersburg, because even the revolutionary examining magistrates could find no evidence of her belonging to a secret organization.

Through her we received our first details about the life of the Imperial Family in Tobol'sk. They had had to remain on the steamer until 12th August, because the Governor's house, which had been assigned to them, was not ready for occupation. Mademoiselle Khitrovo was able, before her arrest, to deliver the letters in her charge to Countess Hendrikov, and to catch a glimpse of the Imperial Family on the balcony. Their Majesties had recog-

nized her. All reports agreed that things were going fairly well with the Family. The inhabitants of Tobol'sk showed a touching respect for them: many passers-by lifted their hats when they passed the Governor's house. In fact, the house had begun to be a place of pilgrimage for the peasants of the surrounding country.

Madame Den decided to move as soon as possible to her mother's in the south, so that the authorities, who were taking a lively interest in her, might forget her existence. At Kerenskiĭ's orders she had been examined several times, and Murav'ev, the president of the commission of inquiry into the defects of the old regime, had questioned her searchingly about her relations with the Imperial Family.

As she had invited me to go with her to Beletskovka we said good-bye to Markov II and his fellow-workers, and made our way by Moscow and Khar'kov to Kremenchug.

CHAPTER 8

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

YOU must not think that these four and a half months in the country were a period of rest and recuperation. I had merely exchanged the dangers of the revolutionary capital for the dangers of revolutionary rural life. I could not sleep peacefully, for I had to keep watch over the safety of people who had become dear to me. I listened anxiously to every suspicious noise, and ran to the courtyard every moment to see if any danger actually threatened.

Of course, all this anxious watching was quite futile, for what could I have done in the event of excesses on the part of the peasants of Beletskovka? A thousand peasants lived round about the estate. Or how could I have resisted the attack of a strolling band, when I had only a few automatic pistols and hand-grenades? The manor-house consisted of two buildings; a big old one, recently restored, and a smaller house. In the larger one lived Madame Den, her son, the French governess, Nataliia Mikhailovna X, and myself. The smaller housed Madame Den's mother, Ekaterina Leont'evna Veletskaia, her mother, Mariia Karlovna Khorvat, and servants, all

of whom, with the exception of the old cook, were women. I was thus the only fighting man in the place.

When I look back now on my life at Beletskovka, I am filled with admiration for the inflexible will of Madame Veletskaia, her almost masculine mind, and her amazing ability in talking to and dealing with the peasants. All of them, from the president of the village soviet, a sly and artful fellow, down to the last little peasant, trembled before her. They often came to consult her on various kinds of business; they addressed her politely as "gracious lady," doffed their hats, and asked for permission to sit in her presence.

At the end of September we got word that Madame Khorvat's house, twenty-five versts distant, had been set on fire and was burned to the ground. This affected us as a warning of danger, a bad omen. We kept the news from the old lady for some time, for she dearly loved this estate, where she had passed the happiest hours of her life.

News came from Petersburg that Markov II intended to send to Tobol'sk my fellow-officer and friend, Kolia Sedov, a member of our organization. All our reports from the capital permitted us to hope that everything was going well in the organization, and that its work was developing very favourably.

The monotony of our life at Beletskovka was agreeably broken by the arrival of my batman, Khalil. He had heard in Novogeorgievsk that I was staying at

Beletskovka, and turned up now with news of my regiment. As his *pièce de résistance* he told me triumphantly of the bad end of the Tatar, Bekirov. He had been caught stealing money from the regimental cash-box and had been flogged till he bled; then he was arrested, but released again, and a little later disappeared from the regiment. Khalil beamed with delight as he told me the story, adding proudly:

“I boxed his ears soundly when I was doing sentry-go with him, Your Honour! I avenged you!”

Towards the middle of September I went to Novogeorgievsk to see regimental life with my own eyes. What I saw reduced me to despair: the regiment was completely disorganized and the men utterly demoralized. No one thought of saluting, and all military bearing was completely gone. The officers were scattered to the four winds, so that I found very few of my friends left. Five officers of my organization were still with the unit, and also my fellow-officers belonging to the Crimean Regiment, Captain N. and First Lieutenant A. They often came to see us at Beletskovka, but this idyll did not last long, for the peasants regarded our meetings with a suspicious eye, seeing in them a counter-revolutionary conspiracy. From their point of view they were quite right, for my friends came not so much for the sake of company as to discuss political problems.

On the instructions of Markov II, we got into touch with Odessa, where my old acquaintance,

Rodzevich, was at the head of the monarchist organization. We got a favourable report: the organization was very successful, and the whole of the south was honeycombed with monarchist groups.

I took it upon myself to form a similar organization in Kremenchug, about which, for obvious reasons, I can even now give no details. I will confine myself to saying that I succeeded in forming a strong group of adherents to our party. Our work mainly consisted in keeping under our eye a number of faithful and reliable men, and forming them into fighting groups regardless of the number of members, and taking into account only the available supply of arms. In addition, our Kremenchug organization was entrusted with the task of distributing propagandist literature. Unfortunately we had far too little material; but our proclamations met with great response among the inhabitants.

It was a red-letter day for us when Madame Den received a brief note from the Empress. Madame Vyrubova had given her Madame Den's address, so she was able to tell us about her life in Tobol'sk. To judge from this letter, things were going well, and they were all in good health. I was deeply moved by Her Majesty's sending me a gracious message in the letter.

At the end of November vague and mysterious reports reached us of bloody excesses on the part of the Bolsheviks in Petersburg. A little later we read in the Kiev paper that it was not a question of mere

excesses but of a regular *coup d'état*. The Provisional Government had been overthrown, Kerenskiĭ had fled, and the cadets who defended the Winter Palace, the headquarters of the Provisional Government, had been mown down by the bluejackets. These bluejackets, Kerenskiĭ's former allies, had bombarded the Winter Palace from the cruiser "Aurora"; hundreds had been murdered in the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul and on the streets. The Government had now passed into the hands of the Soviet of People's Commissars, which consisted of our old acquaintances of Kshesinskaia's Palace, Lenin, Trotskiĭ, and other agitators, who now proclaimed themselves the Russian Government of Workmen and Peasants.

What occupied all our minds was Tobol'sk. What influence would these occurrences have on Tobol'sk? Then our thoughts turned immediately to Petersburg, and in our minds burned the question: what was Markov II doing, and how far had the work for the liberation of Their Majesties really advanced?

Following events in Petersburg, our own position also became worse. Crowds of soldiers were coming from the Front to Beletskovka, all armed and laden with loot. They brought with them the new watchwords: the soil belongs to those who work it, the cattle must be distributed among the peasants, and the houses of the gentry turned into schools. The whole of Beletskovka was in a state of ferment. Innumerable meetings were held in the villages, and

finally the peasants resolved to send a commissar to the estate to take an inventory, to turn the house in which we were living into a school, to sell the stock to the peasants, and to use the proceeds "for purposes of culture and enlightenment." A spiteful little peasant was appointed commissar, who immediately set about restricting our food supply by declaring all the poultry and pigs national property. Half the house was evacuated for the village school that was to be established; the other half Madame Veletskaia was permitted to retain. On a sad day for us the cattle were actually distributed among the peasants, and we were left with only two cows. The village soviet informed Madame Veletskaia of all this, and excused themselves by declaring that it was done not at their wish but because an order to that effect had been issued.

The absence of all news from Petersburg drove Madame Den to despair; in spite of the fact that the demobilization of the troops had already begun, she made up her mind to go to Petersburg. It was really not demobilization, but rather a tremendous mass flight. Millions of men in grey soldiers' coats filled the trains to overflowing, and terrorized the train and station officials. At the beginning of December Madame Den set out; we were very anxious about her the whole time, but she arrived back safely at Christmas, bringing reassuring news. The Revolution had had no effect on the organization, and Markov II was forging full steam ahead.



EMPRESS MARIIA FEODOROVNA WITH THE
GRAND DUCHESS OL'GA

(The author received this picture of the Tsaritsa
with the dedication in 1920)



PARADE IN LIVADIIA, 1913

Major-General Dumbadze reports to the Tsar



PARADE IN LIVADIIA, 1913

The Tsar inspecting the Joint Guard Regiment.
Behind the Tsar Major-General Dumbadze

They were trying to collect money to send individual officers and groups to Tobol'sk; Markov had already a hundred and fifty people at his disposal. In the meantime Sedov had departed for Tobol'sk; but no news had been received from him, which fact was making Markov II very uneasy.

In Petersburg Madame Den had seen Madame Vyrubova, who had been released from custody. The poor woman had first been interned on the yacht "Polar Star," and then in the Svensborg Fortress, from which she was not released till the middle of October. Now she felt broken and ill as a result of all she had been through, and was confined to bed in her own house.

After the street fighting and plundering Petersburg had lost its former splendour: there was no longer an elegantly dressed crowd to be seen on the Nevskii Prospekt, life became more and more difficult every day, and the increase in the cost of living surpassed the worst expectations. Madame Den had found her house occupied by sailors, and had been compelled to put up with friends. She told me with horror of the miseries of the journey, the trains crowded, even the roofs of the carriages occupied, the upholstery torn from the seats, and all the brass-work removed.

After I had heard the news, I said that in spite of the favourable news from Tobol'sk and Markov II's assiduous activity, the position of the Emperor and Empress seemed to me to be dangerous, even critical.

The despatch of Sedov was not sufficient; a considerable number of loyal men should have been sent there long ago. Finally, I declared that I myself, quite apart from whether Markov II sent people to Tobol'sk or not, would make every endeavour to slip through to Tobol'sk. My place was where Their Majesties were. I immediately set about procuring the necessary papers; but I did not succeed in doing so until the middle of January, and then only by chance.

We celebrated New Year's Eve quietly in the family circle. Our first toast was drunk to the Imperial Family. How far were we then from dreaming that this very year now beginning would bring us so much sorrow and disappointment!

I was engaged in making preparations for my departure and procuring the equipment and papers of a private on active service, when, towards the end of January, there was persistent talk of a Ukrainian body of troops, called the "free Cossacks." These troops were to form a civic defence force, and were under the leadership of my old divisional and brigade commander, General Skoropadskii.

On 20th January Captain N.'s soldier-servant arrived quite unexpectedly, and told us that my original regiment, the Crimean Cavalry Regiment, had been attacked and decimated by Sevastopol' sailors at Simferopol on the night of 16th January. In the unequal struggle my stepbrother, Captain Dumbadze, had fallen. The news of the tragic end

of my stepbrother and my beloved regiment depressed me greatly—it was a bad beginning for the New Year!

On 23rd January Kremenchug was occupied by Ukrainian infantry after a brief struggle with the Bolsheviks. At that time two members of the Odessa organization were staying with us, and we decided to go to Kremenchug to find out how matters stood. The whole town was in a state of joyful excitement, and recruiting for the “free Cossacks” was in process. The young men of the town, a large number of civilians, and the officers stationed there, were flocking in crowds to the recruiting office, where some high school boys were sitting enrolling volunteers, while others were distributing rifles and ammunition in the next room.

We decided to join the “free Cossacks” with the object of procuring arms. However, we overestimated the strength of the Ukrainians, a mistake which nearly cost me my life.

For the rule of the Ukrainians in Kremenchug lasted only three days, after which the Bolsheviks occupied the town almost without a struggle, and the “free Cossacks” disbanded without firing a shot. Two days later a red cavalry detachment accompanied by a commissar appeared at Beletskovka. The appearance of the troop was imposing; all the men were mounted on magnificent horses, were well equipped, and wore black felt caps on their heads.

Madame Veletskaia received the commissar, with whom she had been previously acquainted in a business capacity. He had come to arrest me because I had been denounced as a member of the "free Cossacks." Madame Veletskaia interviewed him in the drawing-room; but we were in the next room and heard every word of the conversation. I must say that I was not attracted by the position I found myself in: flight was impossible, and I saw myself faced with certain death. But the extraordinary coolheadedness of Madame Veletskaia saved me. She contrived to persuade the commissar that the charge against me must first be investigated, and begged him to leave me in peace for the time being at least. She would guarantee that I would not run away, and substantiated this by observing that I would never leave her house defenceless and unprotected. After he had enjoyed some potent wine and various good things to eat, the commissar mellowed visibly and departed, although not without promising to make the most drastic investigation into my affair.

I decided to get off as quickly as I could, and turn my back on Beletskovka. My idea was to go first to Khar'kov, where I had been commissioned by Madame Den to deliver letters from the monarchist organization to Count Keller, a cavalry general, and to someone else. From there I intended to go by Moscow to Petersburg.

However, a slight delay proved necessary because

I was unable to procure a soldier's coat until 31st January. I intended to start the next day. Petr, the soldier-servant of Captain N., an honest and reliable man and a soldier of the good old school, offered to accompany me as far as Khar'kov. My travelling papers were ready: I had a supply of forms for the 449th Khar'kov Infantry Regiment, of which I kept one for myself, and left the rest with Madame Den for organization purposes. On the form I wrote something like this:

"Attestation"

that Sergei Narchenko, a one-year volunteer belonging to the 449th Khar'kov Infantry Regiment, is permitted to proceed to Petersburg for 21 days' leave on family business."

That same evening about eight o'clock my future travelling companion rushed into the drawing-room, crying in the utmost alarm:

"Your Honour, we must fly, the peasants are on their way here!"

The village soviet had decided to arrest me, as Petr had learned somehow or other when he was in the village. He hurried straight back to the house to tell me, and on the way overtook a crowd of armed peasants. There was no time for discussion; I quickly pulled on the tattered private's jacket over my officer's uniform, took my private's coat, and in the soldier fashion of the time, left a lock of hair hanging out from below my cap.

I had hardly time to say good-bye to the inhabitants of the manor-house and to exchange a few rapid words with Madame Den, before the peasants appeared in the courtyard. I gave my little Titi one last kiss, Madame Den blessed me with shaking hands, then we two, Petr and I, tumbled down the slope behind the house into the bed of the river. We groped our way out, made a little circuit round the estate, and came out on a cornfield. In the distance we saw the reflection of fire—that was Beletskovka. Immediately, that too disappeared, and we were alone in the endless space of the black fields.

CHAPTER 9

A PRIVATE AMONG PRIVATES

"**W**HERE are you for, comrade," asked some soldiers who were sitting on their boxes in the little kerosin-lit station of Burty, at which we had arrived after wandering about continuously for two hours.

"We were in the village . . . we've been footing it from the Front for three days, and haven't had a bite. . . . There is no boiling water in the stations, curse it! There at the Front we drudged like slaves and here we get nothing," Petr replied to the soldiers. Soon a most original conversation was in progress.

I felt quite at ease, in spite of the unfamiliar conditions; I took care not to join in the conversation, and strolled about on the platform in the dark. I overheard a few sentences:

"We've fought long enough, it's time to make an end of it. If only you could get land . . . they say the land belongs to us now. . . . That's my belief, that it belongs to us . . . but not to the *burzhuis*.¹ Not hand it over? Just let them try it on! What, they are not handing it over . . . ? But of course they'll hand it over. You're a mug. . . . We were at the

¹ Bourgeois.

Front. . . . I have heard that at home in Alexandrovna Vasiliī Ivanovich has been done in. . . . Artemov stuck a bayonet in his jacket because he would not hand over his house. . . . To the devil with all *burzhuīs*, capitalists, and other landowners! They should be spitted on the horns of the devil's mother! . . . That won't do. . . . Our time has come, we are in the right, it's liberty. . . . Yes, what will the officers say to that? The officers? Them with their gold braid, the . . . , to the wall with them! In our regiment the battalion commander was nailed to a tree . . . he refused to remove his epaulettes. . . . With us the officers got hit on the jaw with their epaulettes. That's a good one! Hit on the jaw with their epaulettes! Yes, now they know what it means to deal with us. . . .”

A burst of laughter greeted these words. I must have looked rather sick over it all, for suddenly a voice asked: “What's up with your pal? He looks so hipped.”

“He is ill,” replied Petr.

“What's the matter with him?”

“Consumption, he says.”

“Consumption?” The voice sounded unpleasantly suspicious. To my great relief, the conversation was broken off at this point. A long goods train arrived from Kremenchug. It was packed full of soldiers, and drunken hooting and singing sounded on all sides. We crawled into a carriage, which, to our surprise, was almost empty. We soon discovered

the explanation: half the door was gone. To protect ourselves against the cold, we all huddled into the corner, and sat as close to each other as possible, leaning against our packs. I was relieved when the train started to move, and we left Burty behind, for now we had no longer to fear pursuit. Wild shrieks could be heard from all the carriages:

“Get on with it, Gavril, get on with it. We must go as fast as an express train.”

The soldiers were giving loud expression to their dissatisfaction with the slow rate of progress, and trying to spur on the engine-driver. In the next carriage someone was playing an accordion and another singing to it:

“No-ch-ka temnaia, Marusia,
Provodi menia, boiusia!”¹

The chorus then came in with drunken voices:

“Provozhala, zhala
Do vokzala-ala,
Provodila-ila
I zabyla.”²

What I had been through and the noise and smell in the carriage combined, in spite of the draught,

¹ “Marusia, it is dark.
Come with me, I’m afraid !”

² “She came with me
As far as the station,
After she came with me
She forgot all about me.”

to give me such a frightful headache that I nearly fainted. I leant my head against Petr's shoulder and towards morning fell into a heavy doze.

A loud sonorous voice awoke me:

"Comrades, which of you is an ex-officer must show me his papers."

I opened my eyes. The train was at a standstill. In the carriage door I saw a gigantic soldier, hung round with machine-gun belts and with a rifle in his hand. All was quiet in the carriage.

"There's no such person here," said a voice from the corner of the carriage.

"All right," answered the soldier, and jumped back on to the platform.

I breathed again.

"How do you know that there isn't an officer here? The officers are worse clad than we are now. They are cunning, a ragged soldier's coat on top, and the officer underneath."

However flattering this compliment might be to my fellow officers, I was not much delighted with it: but fortunately someone changed the subject, and we reached Khar'kov without further incident.

The beautiful station of Khar'kov was so filthy as to be almost unrecognizable, and it was packed with soldiers. Placards were displayed everywhere:

"Everyone to the fight against the Tsarist hangmen, the Cossacks! Down with the landowners and capitalists! Land and freedom for the working people! Workers, do your duty, the Red Guard awaits you!"

At the station I said good-bye to my travelling companion and thanked him for all he had done for me. I had already adapted myself to the situation, and no longer felt any embarrassment.

First of all I handed over the letters and documents to the person to whom Madame Den had instructed me to give them, and then proceeded to find Count Keller. On the way, I received a proof that my disguise was quite sufficient without any make-up. I was going along a narrow lane, eating a sausage in my fingers, when two well-dressed women caught sight of me, and swerved aside in disgust: one of them even cried: "*Quelle horreur!*" I could hardly help laughing.

I rang the bell at the Count's house. The door was opened a little way, and someone looked through the crack. When I said I wished to speak to His Excellency, I got the reply:

"Go to the kitchen. The entrance is in the court-yard."

The door was then slammed in my face. There was nothing to do but obey. The servants, the cook, the washerwoman, and a soldier, apparently the Count's orderly, received me in a most unfriendly and suspicious manner.

I wrote my name and rank on a slip, and also my place of service and the object of my visit, placed it in a closed envelope, and handed it to the orderly. The cook tried to draw me into conversation, but was checked by the return of the servant, who said:

"Follow me, His Excellency will see you."

He took me to the Count's study. When the Count saw me standing at the door, he did not move an eyelash, but said: "Good day, brother."

"I wish you good health, Your Excellency," I answered stiffly. The orderly departed and we were alone. The Count got up from his chair, shook hands, gave me a cordial welcome and said with a smile: "You look fine, my dear fellow. The disguise is splendid."

It was the first time I had met the Count, and he made an excellent impression on me. There was something very gallant about this tall, slim figure; his good-natured brown eyes gave evidence of an inflexible will and a strong character; his voice had a metallic ring in it. I handed him the letters I had brought and he read them through.

"I am asked what is my attitude to events," he began. "I shall not give you a written answer, it is too dangerous. Please tell them in Petersburg that I consider that any action would be premature at the moment, and that I will not allow myself to be involved in any harebrained adventures.

"The Kornilov business will come to nothing. They will have occasion to recall my words. The Don district is not the suitable *place d'armes*. It will end in defeat, and thousands of innocent people will have to pay with their lives for Kornilov's mistakes. Russia will never be reorganized without the help of the material and technical resources of a foreign

power; without such resources no army fit for service can be put in the field. As for myself personally, until I see this help at hand, I will take no part in all these movements, as I regard them as useless and stupid.

"Kornilov is a revolutionary general; he is still at the helm. Let him try to save democracy in Russia; perhaps there is still time for that. For myself, I can only command an army which bears God in its soul and the Tsar in its heart. Only faith in God and in the power of the Tsar can save us; only the old army and a universal atonement, not a democratic army and a "free people." We see already to what freedom has brought us! To ignominy and terrible humiliation. Therefore tell them that at the moment I consider any action to be premature. Perhaps I am too pessimistic; but believe me that I understand the present state of things aright."

When I told him I must get to Tobol'sk at all costs, he approved of my design. He also asked me to tell Their Majesties that all his thoughts were with them, and that he had no dearer wish than to see them and help them. Then he wished me a good journey, repeated once more all that he had said, and ringing for the orderly, told him to show me out.

"I thank you, brother, for not having forgotten me," he said in farewell.

"I am happy to be able to serve you, Excellency."

"God be with you. A good journey!"

"I thank Your Excellency."

The study door closed behind me; the orderly led me through the kitchen out into the courtyard, and left me at the gate.

The first part of my task was now fulfilled. There remained only my most heartfelt desire. I must get to Tobol'sk. With this end in view, I reached Petersburg after a three days' journey from Khar'kov.

Immediately I arrived I went to visit Markov II in his secret rooms, where I received a most friendly welcome from him and Sokolov. I handed over the letters to Markov II, and gave him the substance of my talk with Count Keller. At the end of the conversation I asked Markov II to help me to get to Tobol'sk as quickly as possible. I told him quite freely that I lacked funds as well as the necessary papers. Those I had used up to the present must be exchanged for others in Petersburg.

Markov II was very glad to hear of my intentions, all the more so because he had not had any news of Sedov. Unfortunately, no one but Sedov had been sent to Tobol'sk because of scarcity of money. Papers were at my disposal; there was a sufficient supply of these.

According to Markov II the lack of funds was only a temporary thing. Small sums were coming in, it was true, but they were not sufficient for action on a large scale. The chief task of the organization at present, declared Markov, was to raise larger sums, for there was no lack of faithful and reliable men;

they were all well organized and ready to start for Tobol'sk at a moment's notice.

I admit that this report of Markov's on the position of the organization surprised me not a little. I tried to overcome my doubts, and it was not until after I left Petersburg that I lost the faith in Markov's efficiency with which Madame Den had inoculated me.

At the meetings of the heads of the organization, the detailed plans of a rising were discussed, as well as of measures to be taken in case of a successful *coup d'état*. All this gave an impression that the organization was alive and flourishing, and that the financial difficulties were merely a temporary misfortune. How could one imagine an organization engaged in such a far-reaching enterprise, and hoping to carry it through, with only a ten-kopeck piece in its pocket? I also learned during these conferences that there were plans for an alliance with the Germans then in Petersburg as members of various commissions.

A fortnight before my departure for Tobol'sk, I heard from some friends that, quite independent of our organization, Senator Tugan-Baranovskii was also keenly interested in the fate of the Imperial Family and was in touch with Tobol'sk. Apparently he had funds at his disposal, and had, as early as 1917, sent people to Tobol'sk, who were living there under various assumed names. My friends advised me to apply to the Senator for further information.

Not wishing to act on my own initiative, I asked

the advice of Markov II; he, however, told me that he had no confidence in Tugan-Baranovskii, and could not therefore recommend me to form an alliance with him. I naturally abandoned the idea of taking the Senator into my confidence, which I was all the more ready to do as I wished to entrust my plans to as few people as possible.

While in Petersburg I often visited Madame Vyrubova, and was always welcomed like a near relation. She was living in Furshadtskaia Street, where she had a little flat on the sixth floor. She had lost her father a week before my arrival, and this fresh blow had quite broken her down. I could not but feel the very greatest respect for this woman who bore her cross with such true Christian humility. Never for a moment did she forget the prisoners of Tobol'sk, and she had sacrificed her last penny for them. She had an efficient assistant in Madame Sukhomlinova, the now deceased wife of the ex-Minister of War.

In the middle of February Markov II approached me with a request for an introduction to Madame Vyrubova, as the person who had been in the closest relations with the Imperial Couple, and the only person who had been continuously in touch with them. The meeting took place on neutral ground. Markov II addressed a fiery speech to Madame Vyrubova, in which he quite justly accused former court circles of inertia and indifference to the fate of the Imperial Family. He again laid stress on the



THE TSARITSA AND MME VYRUBOVA IN HER MAJESTY'S
BEDROOM



Господи, помажи благодать
твою въ помощь
мнѣ, да прославлю
имѧ твое Стогъ.

София 14

POSTCARD PAINTED BY THE TSARITSA AND
DEDICATED TO MME VYRUBOVA

Inscription: Almighty God, give me Thy blessing,
come to my aid, hallowed be Thy Holy Name

necessity of sending officers to Tobol'sk, but explained that he lacked funds, which must be collected from all the people who had been closely connected with Their Majesties.

Madame Vyrubova replied that she herself had spent her all for the Imperial Family, and that she had no relations with court circles, and could not influence them in any way. Physically, also, she was quite unfit for the exertion of visiting all the people concerned. Markov II repeated once again with particular emphasis that he had more than a hundred officers at his disposal, all supplied with the necessary papers and ready to start at any moment. Madame Vyrubova promised to do all she could to make it possible to despatch other officers, as well as myself, to Tobol'sk. But Markov II was not content with this, and began afresh to thunder about the treachery of court and aristocratic circles. He threatened that if they did not help him he would set in motion against them a white terror not a whit less frightful than the present red terror. These reproaches could not affect Madame Vyrubova in the least; besides, she had no point of contact with these circles. Markov II, apparently, merely wished to hurt her and give her a false impression of his power. That was the end of the conversation.

One day I met at Madame Vyrubova's a young man, tall and fair, with a toothbrush moustache. His grey-green eyes were penetrating, and showed him to possess some intellectual power. It was

B. N. Solov'ev, the husband of Rasputin's eldest daughter. Madame Vyrubova told me that he had been of great assistance to the Imperial Family, and had been the intermediary between them and herself. Soon after this he again departed for Tobol'sk with some things for Their Majesties.

I was all ready to start, except for the papers which Markov II had promised to supply. Days passed and still I did not receive the promised documents. Finally, chance came to my aid: Rodzevich arrived in Petersburg from Odessa. He had also been at Beletskovka, and told me that after my flight the peasants had searched both houses. When he heard of my difficulties, he gave me two blank forms of the 449th Khar'kov Infantry Regiment; they were the same ones that I had given Madame Den to keep at Beletskovka. She had given some to Rodzevich, and thus, without knowing it, she helped me to carry out my plans.

That very day I seated myself at the typewriter in our secret rooms on the Nevskii, and proceeded to compose my new passport. I had got as far as the name of the mythical soldier who was to report to the local military commander at Ishim, and had stopped to consider. I looked out of the window and caught sight, opposite me, at the corner of the Nevskii Prospekt and the Vladimirskaia, of a shop-sign bearing the name "Solov'ev and Sons." Without thinking, I typed in this name, and went to Madame Vyrubova and proudly displayed my new

"papers." She gave a cry of horror: "Whatever have you done, Serezha? Solov'ev is the name of Rasputin's son-in-law."

I had never thought of that, but now that the form was already filled in, I could not alter it.

Before I set out I bought some books as presents: for the Tsesarevich, Sienkiewicz's *With Fire and Sword* and Zhdanov's *Young Ruler*; some of Leïkin's novels for the Grand Duchesses, and three English novels for the Tsaritsa. Madame Vyrubova gave me back my book, *The Earthly Life of Christ*, after she had signed it "Anka." This book was also intended for the Empress.

Madame Vyrubova gave me a bundle containing various things for Their Majesties, including a photograph of her father, letters, and a hyacinth. She also gave me letters from Madame Sukhomlinova and Emma Frederiks. She advised me to visit the local priest, Father Alexei Vasil'ev on my arrival, and get further directions from him.

Markov II commissioned me to find Sedov in Tobol'sk, and to write him a full report to a covering address as soon as I arrived. He also gave me 240 roubles for the journey. The two officers who were to follow me, Captain Grünwald of the Guards, and the son of the member of the Imperial Council, S. Andreevskii, were already making preparations for their journey.

With a bundle of books and underclothing in my hand and 800 roubles in my pocket, after saying

good-bye to Madame Vyrubova and Markov II, I proceeded to Nikolaevskii Station. I was very happy to be going to Tobol'sk, and a firm faith in God's mercy gave me strength and inspired me with courage. I was unshakeably convinced that, in spite of all difficulties and dangers, I should reach Tobol'sk.

CHAPTER 10

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY TO SIBERIA

WHENEVER, as often happens, my job in the sleeping-car seems loathsome to me, I have only to remember that journey to Tiumen' in March 1918 to become contented with my lot again.

As I approached the Nikolaevskii Station I had a foretaste of the joys to come. I was standing by the statue of Alexander III and thinking of Russia's past greatness, when suddenly a crowd of ragged soldiers, laden with bundles, trunks, and packs began to pour out of the main entrance. They were growling and cursing; some women with children who were trying to get into the station were simply bowled over into the mud of the streets. The women shrieked and children wept.

"Murderers, curse you! You call yourselves rescuers and citizens, do you? God of justice!" wailed a woman.

"Shut your mouth, witch, if you don't want to be a corpse," shouted a passing soldier, with a lock of hair fluttering under his cap, which had lost its peak, and he gave the woman a kick.

I stood petrified beside the statue and gazed at the

scene. Finally, a little group of civilians and soldiers with red armlets appeared and began to restore order.

"Comrades, go to the military platform. The train starts from there, expressly for us, comrades," cried a youth in a soldier's coat.

"To the military platform, comrades! Gavriilo, shove a bayonet in the station master's belly if he does not release the train. The *burzhuis* can travel, but we must drop dead on the platform! We have suffered. But you, what have you done?"

The whole pack, cursing and swearing, turned towards the Ligovka.

According to the time-table, my train did not start till 10.20. I looked once again at the statue, thinking: "That is the old Russia, this is the new." All round me I heard the most obscene abuse. At the station people were only allowed to enter one by one, and an almost incredible scrimmage was going on. I held my passport ready in my hand. This scrap of paper, manufactured in our secret rooms, was now to face its first test. I felt a little uneasy. Would my trick come off or not? At last the comrades pushed me towards the door that was my goal; a dirty soldier tore my passport from my hand.

"Pass on, comrade," he growled in a husky voice.

"Thank Heaven," I thought to myself. I did not wait a second bidding, but began to push ahead. There was an enormous block in front of me. Everyone was shouting together:

"Down with the military command! They have sucked our blood long enough. Are we going to stand it? Forward, shove ahead, comrades! To the platform."

They pushed, shoved, and almost crushed each other to death, without advancing a step. At last we managed to move a little. On a wooden shed in front of the platform, a sign was displayed with the words: "Military Commissar." There we had to show our papers again and have them stamped. A load fell from my heart when I found myself on the platform with my papers in my hand, duly stamped "Military Commissar of the Nikolaevskii Station."

The military platform was peopled by a motley crowd of humanity. Among the soldiers stood women and children, a large number of civilians and factory workers, and an even larger number of suspicious-looking loafers. Household utensils, packs, baskets, and trunks were piled up everywhere. On one heap was perched a gramophone with a bent trumpet.

I discovered that they were refugees from Iamburg and Narva, who had had to abandon their homes during the last German offensive. The poor people did not know themselves whither and why they had fled.

It was already half-past ten and there was no sign of our train. In the worst of the crush women were offering sausage, bread, and other delicacies for sale; for a rouble I acquired half a pound of sausage and

a piece of bread. What this so-called "tea sausage" really consisted of was a mystery to me; was it horse or even dog? The bread, too, was an almost uneatable substitute, which, into the bargain, was almost impossible to chew.

"Comrades, will those of you who want to go to Vologda follow me. The train goes from Platform 5," cried a shrill voice. Like an avalanche the crowd swept through the passenger train on the line and on to Platform 5. Growling, cursing, the rattle of broken window panes, and the crash of smashed carriage-doors filled the air.

I am quite unconscious of how I arrived at Platform 5. All the buttons of my coat were torn off in the process, and I had a violent pain in my left side from a blow from the corner of a trunk which hit against me in the crowd. But at least I was where I wanted to be. Slowly and panting heavily, the long train, consisting entirely of goods trucks, approached, which, sooner or later, was to take me eastwards. Now I was really on the way to that distant spot where lived and sorrowed those whom I loyally served, the subjects of my idolization and my prayers.

After waiting for what seemed an age, the train started. I took off my cap and crossed myself, then lit a match and looked at the time; it was 4 a.m. There was an uncanny quietness in the carriage. Apparently nobody believed that we had really started and that there was a far-off and feeble glimmer of hope that one day we might reach Vologda.

"Comrades, light a candle somebody! In this darkness you could easily get your feet crushed," urged a voice from the far corner of the carriage.

A candle flickered into flame, which only very faintly lit up our comfortless surroundings, but nevertheless, one felt better. I looked around me; there was not a trace of a stove; various signs showed that the carriage had previously been used exclusively for cattle transport.

In front of me a woman was sitting on a bundle nursing an infant. She had an enormous basket before her, round which sat three comrades leaning against their trunks. The door was barricaded with jute sacks. On my left, about twenty soldiers were crouching on their packs and trunks, all in rags and stiff with dirt. In the middle of the carriage a civilian in a peaked cap was stretched along two trunks: it was he who had placed the candle-stump at the disposal of the company. Altogether, there were about fifty-five people packed into one carriage, not to mention several children and their innumerable possessions. Outside, the temperature must have been ten degrees below freezing point; in the carriage it was round about zero.

As everybody was trying to sleep there was no regular conversation, but some talking was going on in one corner:

"The cursed Germans will certainly take Peter.¹ They're advancing, the *canaille*! At the beginning it

¹ Petersburg.

was all right; we fraternized with them, gave them bread and got rum in return . . . and immediately after that, it was the day before yesterday, they began to push forward. We shouted to them: ‘Comrades, we don’t want any annexations. . . . Throw away your guns.’ But the scoundrels fired one volley after the other, and actually started firing machine guns. Our comrade commander, a nice fellow, who used to be the brigade commander’s cook, immediately gave the order: ‘All go home, as we do not wish for indemnities, and desire neither war nor peace!’ He was the first to get into the forest in his car, and us after him. The Germans went on shooting for a while, and then stopped. One of them, an officer, called to us as we went off: ‘Adieu, Russians,’ and then something about rum. But we were past caring about rum. We had hardly time to look round before we were in Peter. . . . And their officers are to blame for it all. If they had not been there, our comrades would have been eating German sausage in Berlin by this time. . . . But the officers are preparing to occupy Peter.”

“It is not the German officers who are to blame, but the Germans themselves, comrades. They are a self-conscious and enlightened people,” a soldier who was perched on a box a little way off said in a serious tone.

“Enlightened, just think of it! And what are we, not enlightened, perhaps, eh? You shut up, comrade, else you’ll be dragged off your trunk and done

for!" cried one of the politicians to the sceptic, and embellished his threat with an oath which would not have passed any censor in the world. The sceptic held his peace and merely gave a sigh.

The stump of candle began to flicker feebly, and a minute or two later it was as dark as pitch. The conversation languished, and the rest of the night was comparatively peaceful.

It began to grow light. Through a tiny window the interior of our creaking and rattling temporary home was illuminated by the feeble rays of the northern sun. The carriage began to wake up to a life of its own: in one corner someone was sneezing incessantly; the comrade who had threatened the sceptic was blowing his nose comfortably over his neighbour's back. The sceptic himself was still sitting on his trunk, apparently afraid of losing his comfortable place, and whispering: "Lord, save us! Lord have mercy upon us."

Behind the trunk a child was howling with occasional paroxysms of whooping-cough. Its mother was trying to quieten it, and weeping aloud herself in concert. Political questions were no longer being discussed, but, as a substitute, a quarrel was in process between those who were sitting at the door and those in the inside of the coach. The latter were protesting that the former would not let them get out. This exchange of opinions consisted mainly of coarse obscenities and oaths. How tired I was of this everlasting obscenity and swearing. Everyone cursed in

season and out of season, and blasphemed at every turn.

The day passed in the most utter boredom. By evening I was quite dazed, and no longer noticed what was going on in the carriage, neither the obscenity nor the continual wandering in and out of my fellow-travellers, nor the furious attacks to which our carriage was exposed at every station, nor the equally furious defence made by the comrades.

Night came once again. Next morning I got out of the carriage not without excitement. The driving force which hurled me out was not my will but the shoving of the comrades behind me, who kicked me and my bundle down on to the platform. The first stage was now reached: we had arrived at Vologda.

The station resembled a mad-house. Human avalanches were pouring in all directions, the mud-grey of the soldiers' coats being the predominant feature. The ear caught the sounds which had by now become so familiar, shrieks, weeping, and abuse *ad nauseam*.

Drawn along in the stream, I reached the exit. A sonorous voice brought me to my senses: "Comrades, will those for Viatka follow me."

By a violent effort, I succeeded in turning. Immediately I was once again carried away in the stream and, after crossing several sets of railway lines, reached a train which luckily was made up of passenger coaches.

I felt like a child on its birthday when I succeeded

in ferreting out a place on the upper tier. It seemed to me that, compared with the earlier stage of my journey, I was now in Paradise. I slept like the dead, and heard nothing of the departure of the train. It was not till morning that I was able to congratulate myself on the inaccessibility of my position. From my height I could look down with satisfaction on the packed compartment. Heaps of snoring human forms covered every inch of it.

At Buř white bread was for sale in the station. Everybody rushed at it like a pack of wild beasts let loose from their cages. Nor could I resist the temptation, and devoured a large loaf. I felt ill at once, as my stomach had become unaccustomed to such large quantities. The train moved out with the celerity of a snail, but I was in good spirits in spite of it, for, although slowly, I was getting nearer to my goal. As on the earlier part of the journey I took no part in the general conversation, but I was several times drawn into it against my will.

A young man in private's uniform, who had, like me, found a seat on the upper tier, attracted my attention. His intelligent expression marked him out from the rest, and he supported me in my discussions with the soldiers. He was an actor by profession, had just been demobilized, and was hurrying to join his company which was somewhere in Irkutsk or Omsk. Perhaps he was as much an actor as I was an employee of the brewery, Haberbusch and Schille of Warsaw, for so I described myself.

Never in my life have I told so many lies as in these few days. In the end I almost believed myself that I was an ex-employee of the brewery, who had been caught by the war in Ishim, whither I had gone on the firm's business in 1914, and who was now returning to my depot after demobilization.

For six days our "rabble-car" crawled on its way to Ekaterinburg. Our train was fully entitled to be called by this name, which was one we had invented for the Petersburg tramways when we were cadets. The knowledge that I would soon see my beloved Emperor and Empress cheered me up, and when we came to Ekaterinburg, I joyfully walked up and down the platform.

"Comrade, may I have a word with you?" I gave an involuntary shiver, and turned round. It was my travelling companion who represented himself as an actor.

"I want to draw your attention to the fact that the comrades in the compartment are of opinion that you are not what you give out." I made an effort to remain calm and said:

"What idiots! Why do they think that?"

"Well, you know, you said: 'For you the new style, for us the old.' The comrades took exception to the expressions 'for us and for you,' and drew their own conclusions from them!"

Then I remembered that in the course of a discussion on the introduction of the new calendar by the Bolsheviks, I had actually used these ominous ex-

pressions. And so the *canaille* had noticed it. I pulled out my papers and showed them to my companion. He did not even look at them, but said: "Yes, yes, comrade, I am convinced your papers are genuine. I only wanted to warn you."

I thanked him very much for his attention and we separated. This, my first mistake on the journey, taught me that one could not be too careful, and that, in spite of its stupidity and glaring lack of culture, this mob had sharp enough ears for anything suspicious.

Next day, about three in the afternoon, we arrived at Tiumen'. I said good-bye to my fellow-travellers, shook the actor warmly by the hand, and jumped down on to the platform with a lighter heart. My travelling papers were not inspected, and so I found no difficulty in leaving the station. I stepped out on to a large square, from which a broad, well-trodden, snow-covered street led to the town.

On the right were stalls where women were selling all kinds of good things. On the opposite side stood a row of sledges, very like those of central Russia, but broader and lower, with a higher back-seat, and drawn by small Siberian horses. In order not to be conspicuous, I mingled with the crowd surrounding the stalls, and learned from the women that the sledges were waiting for passengers for Tobol'sk and the district around Tiumen'. I bought a supply of excellent sausage and good bread, and then proceeded to hire a sledge.

After some bargaining I came to an arrangement with a Tatar, by which he was to take me on to the next stage, twenty versts distant, for thirty roubles. He first took me to his house, a solid wooden building with several annexes, in which the rooms were painfully clean and tidy. While he was getting his vehicle ready, his wife, a pleasant Tatar woman, regaled me with tea in a comfortably furnished room.

I took my place in the sledge, and, to the accompaniment of the tinkling bells, was rapidly driven out of Tiumen'. A few minutes later we were in the endless space of the snowfields. In the distance I could see a purple strip that was smoke and forest and indicated human habitations. The horses kept step and the scene changed imperceptibly with the approach of night: great pine trees, deep in snow, stretched their boughs over the road; the moon poured its rays over a world plunged in eternal sleep. The air was saturated with the smell of resin, and one breathed lightly and easily. Soon the forest came to an end; a dog barked in the distance, the sledge glided along more rapidly, lights appeared on the horizon.

"We are almost there," said my driver, pointing ahead with his whip. A moment later we had arrived in a large village. I looked around me curiously. The houses were all large, two-storey buildings, with a flight of steps leading up to the door. In the centre of the village was a large brick-



THE CROWN PRINCE

Top left : As an officer in his regiment of Guards

Top right : As a private in his regiment of Guards

Beneath : With the donkey-cart presented to him
by the King of Italy



THE TSARITSA WITH THE SICK CROWN PRINCE

Tsarskoe Selo 1909

built church with an imposing belfry. The whole impression given was one of prosperity.

The peasant to whom my driver took me was a giant with a broad dark-brown beard; his wife attracted me by her quiet manners and decorous bearing. In their living-room the little lamp burned before the ikons; portraits of the Emperor and Empress hung on the walls.

I felt as if I were in a dream: a few hours ago, mad buffoonery, tatterdemalion soldiers, the ubiquitous patches of red and coarse and obscene talk, and here the eternal light burning before the ikons, portraits of the Tsar, and the melodious voice of the mistress of the house as she entertained me with the inevitable tea and “shangas.”

There sprang up in my mind a conviction that the whole of Russia was not infected with the plague of socialism and revolution. The true and loyal subjects of the Tsar were to be sought, not in the magnificence of the Court nor in high society, which had been the first to betray their sovereign, but here, among the simple, uncultivated Siberian peasants. Surely it would easily be possible to create from these a strong nucleus of fighters faithful to their Emperor; only an energetic leader would be necessary. Here and not Petersburg must be the centre of the organization.

I recalled Markov II's parting words: “I am convinced, Serezha, that we shall be able to establish ourselves in Tobol'sk. Do not forget that you won't

be long alone; other officers will follow you, one after another. . . .”

The only thing incomprehensible to me was why these officers had not been despatched earlier, why I alone had the task of finding Kolia Sedov, who had been sent out in the September of last year. Once more I remembered Markov’s furious attacks on poor Madame Vyrubova and his demands for money. How difficult it was to reconcile all this with the conferences on the Nevskii Prospekt. There the talk was of refilling all the administrative posts, the amalgamation of all the organizations, of an imminent *coup d'état* and the overthrow of the Bolsheviks, while all the time funds were lacking to take any serious measures for the liberation of the Imperial Family. My brain simply couldn’t fathom it all.

Soon my firm faith in Markov II, whose appearance was so expressive of inflexible will and iron resolution, once again re-established itself, and all my doubts vanished. I was once more unshakeably convinced that this man would perform all that he had promised.

The villages I passed through were all alike: in all I saw the same large peasants’ huts. The Tatar villages were somewhat poorer looking, but even they possessed beautiful mosques with pointed minarets. I drove through one such a Tatar village at dawn, and while the east glowed in the rays of the rising sun, the snow-fields glittered with all the colours of the rainbow, and my sledge glided slowly

through the main street of the awakening village, I heard a drawling voice calling: "Allah il Allah." On the parapet of the tall minaret stood an old man with a long white beard calling the faithful to morning prayer.

At one of my numerous halting-places a bowed figure in the driver's room attracted my particular attention. The old man was still vigorous, and I had some conversation with him. He himself did not know how old he was, but certainly he was over a hundred. He told me of the times when the couriers of the Tsar had travelled in Siberia, and of a great war between Russia and several other nations. From certain details it appeared that this was Napoleon's campaign of 1812.

At night, as we were driving through a large and prosperous village, I asked my driver its name. The answer was: "That's Pokrovskoe."

I was surprised to hear this name. So here I was in the native village of Rasputin, the subject of so many tales of tongue and pen. I asked the driver if Rasputin had not lived here, and begged him to tell me something about him.

"He was a good man, a kind-hearted man. He helped us peasants generously. I don't believe there is a single person in the village who would not owe him three or five or even fifty roubles. Every time he came from Petersburg he helped everybody. He also cured diseases, and could stop bleeding. . . . In a word, a man of God. . . . They used to say that

the Emperor and Empress had received him. . . . He took the side of us peasants with the Tsar. That was why the *burzhuis* killed him."

"Was he rich?"

"There's no saying. He had money, certainly, but he was always giving it to the people. The family was not left with much."

It was the first time I had listened to an opinion of this kind about Rasputin. So the peasants regarded him as their protector and champion with the Tsar! The driver's remarks showed that he and his fellow-villagers thought that the *burzhuis*, that is, the rich and great, had got rid of Rasputin because he defended the interests of the peasants.

An ineffable feeling of joy overcame me when, after a journey that seemed endless, I heard the driver's voice saying: "Well, my son, now we are driving along the river Tobol and will soon be in Tobol'sk."

We came out of the forest, the sledge turned rapidly aside from the road, and slid down the slope and over a long, broad ditch. As a short cut the driver had taken to the ice and was driving along the frozen stream. A magnificent panorama stretched before my eyes: the river broadened, the banks grew further apart, and, after we had turned round a bend, I caught sight of the town of Tobol'sk in the moonlight. On the high bank gleamed innumerable church domes, surrounded by great stone walls. The way now lay over a smooth wide stretch of snow; on our left ran another broader road.

"That is the Irtysh, my son. Here, where we are driving now, the Tobol flows into the Irtysh," explained the driver. Lights were burning in the windows of many of the houses; now and then hurrying pedestrians emerged from the darkness. Two more turnings and the sledge came to a stand before a one-storey house, with Hotel Khvastunov on the sign-board. My driver sprang from the box and rang the bell; I took off my cap and crossed myself. My dearest wish was at last realized; I was in Tobol'sk.

CHAPTER II

THE HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

THE porter, a sturdy fellow with a cunning eye, carried my pack into his lodge. I handed my documents over to him for registration, and once again trotted out the old tale of the brewery of Haverbusch and Schille. This time I added a moving story of my old parents who had had to fly from Poland, and were now in a state of poverty and misery in Iamburg. I said I was trying to get them to Siberia, where they could end their days in peace.

Satisfied with my explanations the porter at once began to complain of the difficulty of living and the poor money he earned. The hotel was almost empty except for two permanent guests and a new arrival who had come from Tiumen' a day or two ago. This last was evidently a Bolshevik, perhaps even a commissar.

Arrived in my room I was at last able to open my pack for the first time for days. All the things I had brought with me were safe; even the hyacinth Madame Vyrubova had given me, which I had packed in a cigarette box, was not withered. I took some books, the flower, the photograph of the late Alexandre Sergeevich Taneev, Madame Vyrubova's

father, the letters which I had hidden under my boots, and made them all up into a parcel which I intended to hand over to Father Vasil'ev. I wrote on the books: "I beg you graciously to accept these small gifts. Little M." My book, *The Earthly Life of Jesus Christ*, with the inscription "Anka," was also in this first parcel.

All night I was in such a state of feverish excitement that I hardly closed an eye. About ten next morning I took my parcel and went out. It was a glorious frosty winter day, and the air refreshed me a little. I asked a passer-by where the Blagoveshchenskaia Church was, of which Father Vasil'ev was the priest. I was directed to the main street, where I soon caught sight of the church, and, a few hundred paces further on, the Governor's House, where Their Majesties were living.

This did not look exactly as it had been described to me. It was a fairly large, simple, whitewashed, two-storey building, the front facing the main street, and the side, in which was a flight of steps, giving on a broad side street.

In order not to attract attention I did not stay long in front of the house, and went into the church, where a large number of people were praying. After mass I spoke to the church elder, who told me that Father Alexei lived close by the church. When I gave the priest the password which Madame Vyrubova had told me, he knew at once that I came from her and that he had nothing to fear from me. He

briefly described the situation of Their Majesties. According to him the position was growing worse every day, as the Bolsheviks in Russia were devoting increasing attention to the Imperial Family. The allowance of eight hundred roubles a month which was paid for every member of the Imperial Family was not anything like enough to enable them to live comfortably, but it was eked out by voluntary donations from the inhabitants and the monasteries in the neighbourhood.

The attitude of the inhabitants of Tobol'sk and the peasants in the surrounding districts towards Their Majesties was all that could be desired, but the temper of the guards had deteriorated as time went on. The greater number of the soldiers who had originally constituted the guard had been demobilized and sent home, and had been replaced by a new detachment from Petersburg and Tsarskoe Selo. However, even now, there was still a considerable number of devoted men among them, on whom one could rely if occasion arose. Officially, there were no Bolshevik officials in Tobol'sk. The workers' council had been elected in the previous year, and had made no difficulties for the Emperor and Empress. About our emissary Sedov, Father Vasil'ev had not yet had any news, nor did he know anything about Markov II's organization.

B. N. Solov'ev, Rasputin's son-in-law, had been in Tobol'sk a week ago, had brought underclothing and winter clothes for the prisoners, and had then

gone on to Pokrovskoe. The whole Imperial Family were in good health and bore all the unpleasantness of their imprisonment with Christian humility.

Finally, Father Vasil'ev declared that it was impossible to remain a passive looker-on any longer. Energetic measures must be taken, as he had already told Madame Vyrubova. It was necessary to despatch a small group of devoted men to Tobol'sk, and, above all, have adequate funds in hand, as, without this, every attempt was foredoomed to failure. I assured him that there was no lack of devoted men, as very soon I was to be followed by an adequate number of officers who would arrive one by one.

With regard to the financial side I said I was sure that an energetic man like Markov II must in the end be successful in finding the necessary money; Madame Vyrubova's financial position was very precarious, but, nevertheless, she was to send, in addition to myself, two members of the Markov organization at her own expense, and she really could not be expected to do any more.

Finally, I asked the priest to help me to find premises suitable for the headquarters of the organization in Tobol'sk, or the surrounding district. I said that the one aim and object of my life was to help, even though it might be in a very humble way, my beloved Imperial Family. I handed the parcel I had brought with me to the priest with a request that he would give it to Their Majesties with my

most humble expressions of warmest love and devotion. Father Vasil'ev promised to do his best to carry out my wishes, then he blessed me and made an appointment for next day during mass in the church, where our meeting would attract least attention.

I left the priest, and for the sake of prudence took a roundabout way through several narrow side streets, finally arriving back at the Governor's House, pacing slowly past it. In the window at the extreme left of the second storey, I noticed the Grand Duchesses Ol'ga and Mariia talking together. I stood there for a second or two but saw no one else. Then I rapidly returned to the hotel.

I unlocked my door. My strength had quite deserted me, so that I had to go to bed and lie there motionless for several hours. The rest of the day and the whole evening I spent in composing a letter to the Empress, in which I described what had happened in Russia, enumerated all the victims, and gave an account of Madame Den's life at Beletskovka and of the fate of Madame Vyrubova. I implored Her Majesty not to lose heart; we had not forgotten her. Tante Ivette (that was Markov II's *nom de guerre*) was working feverishly, everything was going like clockwork, and the day of their release would soon be here. In the evening I gave this letter to Father Vasil'ev's son, and asked him to hand it to his father to be forwarded.

Next morning I could hardly restrain my impatience during mass. Then, while everyone was

leaving the church, I noticed Father Vasil'ev give me a sign, and I went up to the altar. In a trembling voice and words of deeply felt emotion, he told me of Their Majesties' gratitude for my coming. Then he surreptitiously handed me a little ikon as a present from the Empress, which I was to wear as a medal, and a prayer-book with an inscription in Her Majesty's own handwriting: "To little M. with my blessing. Ch."¹ The Empress also sent me a large cigarette-holder made of fossil ivory. As Father Alexeī handed this to me, he said:

"Her Majesty was at a loss to know what to give you, until at last she thought of this holder and cried: 'Probably he is a smoker, so I will send this. When he smokes, he will often think of me.' "

For Madame Vyrubova I received a postcard, on which was a drawing of an angel by the Empress, with an inscription in Church-Slavonic script: "God in Heaven, send me Thy blessing, hallowed be Thy Name." Further, Her Majesty gave me for her intimate friend, Madame Den, a small cigarette-holder of fossil ivory.

I was so happy that I could find no words of thanks. Father Vasil'ev went on: "Her Majesty believes that it will be dangerous for you to remain in Tobol'sk. You might be recognized, by Colonel Kobylinskiĭ for example, or his friend Mademoiselle Bitner. They knew you at Tsarskoe Selo, didn't

¹ Short for Chief. The Tsaritsa was the Chief of M. Markov's regiment.

they? So the Empress asks you to leave Tobol'sk as soon as possible, and go to Pokrovskoe to Boris Nikolaevich (Solov'ev), and remain there for the present."

My joy gave place to speechless despair at the priest's words, and he had the greatest difficulty in comforting and pacifying me. In the end there was nothing for me to do but say that I would obey Her Majesty's sacred wishes, and depart for Pokrovskoe that very day. But I confessed to the priest that I had no money to carry out this plan, as my total remaining capital amounted to only a hundred and fifty roubles. Father Vasil'ev was somewhat taken aback at this; but he gave me two hundred and forty roubles, begging me, however, to pay him back as soon as possible, as it was his own money, and he needed it very badly himself.

As I was giving him my promise to do this, the Tsar's valet came into the church, and in the name of the Emperor and Empress and their Royal Highnesses thanked me once more for coming and for my presents. He told me that Their Majesties were very anxious to see me from the window at least, since nothing else was possible, and that he had been sent to the church to walk in front of me, as Their Majesties might not recognize me in civilian clothes.

I said good-bye to the priest and received his blessing. I handed over to the valet the rest of the books I had brought with me, and left the church, allowing him to precede me. When still some way off, I

caught sight of the Imperial Family at the windows of the second storey. The Tsar was standing in the door of the balcony, with the Heir Apparent sitting beside him on the window-sill; behind him the Empress stood with her arm round him; at the Heir Apparent's side sat the Grand Duchess Anastasiia; the Grand Duchess Mariia was standing by the Empress, and behind them, apparently on a chair or stool, the Grand Duchesses Ol'ga and Tat'iana.

About twenty paces from the house I stopped, and, to gain time, took out the new cigarette-holder, and began fussily searching my pockets for my cigarette case and matches. Their Majesties and the family recognized me at once, and smiled at my appearance: in my civilian overcoat and hareskin cap I must have looked much more like a little Petrograd tradesman than a Guards' officer. I spun out every movement to gain time, but at last stuck the cigarette in the holder, lit it, and raised my head. The Empress greeted me with an almost imperceptible bow; the Heir Apparent looked at me with apparent curiosity, and said something to his mother. I stood a little longer at the corner, and then went slowly from window to window without taking my eyes away.

When I got to the corner a sledge was approaching me; I stopped it, got in, and was driven to the other end of the street, where there was a sausage shop. There I made some purchases, placed my parcel

ostentatiously on my knee, and told the driver to take me back along the same street. Their Majesties had seen through my manœuvre, and were still at the window when I passed the second time. I saw the Empress give a little nod, then the Governor's House disappeared from my view.

My most fervent desire had been realized: I had seen the Imperial Family again, and kept my oath. But, at the same time, I was desperately anxious about Their Majesties' hopeless position. What should I have felt if I had any idea that I would never again see the prisoners in the Governor's House?

Two hours later a sledge stood before the hotel door: the porter wished me a good journey and expressed the hope that he would see me again soon, and also "my old parents." To the sound of sleigh bells I drove off to Pokrovskoe, in order to carry out the Tsaritsa's orders.

I had arrived in Tobol'sk at 11 p.m. on the 10th March, and I left it again at 4 p.m. on the 12th. I had no idea that I would never return to it again.

"We are very much touched by your coming and very grateful for your gifts. The large cigarette-holder is for you, the small one for I. A. (Den), the card for A. A. (Vyrubova). Again many thanks for remembering me. With the most cordial good wishes of your Ch."

For the hundredth time I re-read the Empress's note, to me a sacred possession, as I sat in the sleigh

and re-traversed the way I had come. This time I had no eyes for the beauties of nature. I was entirely occupied with my recent experiences: one question gave me unceasing anxiety: what was going to happen? I discovered no answer, and had to console myself with the thought that Rasputin's son-in-law, Solov'ev, who was better acquainted with local conditions, would give me a helping hand and find some way out.

At dawn, as we were driving through a forest, we suddenly heard sleigh bells in the distance, accompanied by savage cries and singing. The sinister noise came nearer and nearer, and a troïka shot past us at furious speed. In it stood a gigantic figure stretched to his full height; his fur cap was on the side of his head, he wore a short fur coat with the skin turned outside, and swung a big red flag in his hand. A second troïka followed, full of soldiers with rifles and machine guns, and behind it rushed eight more sledges, occupied with men armed to the teeth. The whole train shot past us like a vision of the Apocalypse, and disappeared round a bend in the road.

My driver murmured thoughtfully: "Have these comrades come to fetch the Tsar perhaps?"

It had happened then! What I had been all the time dreading had come to pass: the Bolsheviks were reaching out their bloodstained hands to Tobol'sk.

CHAPTER 12

RASPUTIN'S SON-IN-LAW

AFTER a day that seemed endless, I at last reached Pokrovskoe about nine o'clock in the evening. I gave a sigh of relief as my sleigh drove up to Rasputin's house; it resembled the other peasants' houses in the village, except that it was slightly better built.

I knocked—no answer. I rapped rather more loudly and urgently—again no answer. The shutters were closed, and no light was to be seen. I was rather at a loss; but there was nothing for it but to knock again, which I proceeded to do with greater violence. At last I heard footsteps. A trembling female voice asked, without opening the gate:

“What do you want?”

I bent down quite close to the keyhole, so that the driver would not hear, and said:

“I have come to see Boris Nikolaevich, with a letter from Father Vasil'ev of Tobol'sk.”

“Boris Nikolaevich is not here,” answered the voice, and I thought I heard a suppressed sob.

It was only after long and earnest entreaty on my part that the gate was finally opened. I found myself in a roomy courtyard, face to face with an elderly



ARCHDUKE ERNST LUDWIG VON HESSEN



PRINCE AND PRINCESS HEINRICH VON PREUSSEN

Inscribed to the Author

woman wrapped in a short fur coat, and with Siberian felt boots on her feet. She sobbed out:

"What do you want with Boris Nikolaevich? He is not here. The soldiers took him away."

This news was a frightful blow and quite bereft me of speech. The woman silently conducted me to a big room which was in complete disorder. The only light came from a large oil lamp which was burning in front of an image of the Virgin, magnificently executed and chased with silver. Two women had put their heads through the door leading to the next room, and were gazing at me anxiously.

I tried to be brief in explaining to the older woman who I was. I told her I had come to Tobol'sk on behalf of Madame Vyrubova, and had there received orders from Father Vasil'ev to go to Pokrovskoe. When I mentioned Madame Vyrubova's name the face of my interlocutor cleared: "You know Annushka? She sent you?" I replied that this was so, and a happy thought struck me. I took two photographs of Madame Den out of my pocket-book and showed them to her.

"Do you know who that is?" I asked.

The photographs worked like a spell: "Look, Varen'ka, it's Iul'ia Alexandrovna."

I now knew that the woman was Rasputin's widow, and that one of the girls was her youngest daughter. When she too had assured herself that the photographs really represented Madame Den, the attitude of the two women towards me changed completely.

"Please come right in, my son. We thought at first that you were one of those who took away Boris Nikolaevich."

They took me into the next room, plainly the dining-room, which was also in a state of disorder. Bits of photograph frames lay on the window-sill. In a tearful voice Madame Rasputina told me what had happened. About two o'clock in the afternoon, a sledge drove up to the house, armed soldiers came into the courtyard, and at once fell on Solov'ev. He showed them his false papers, whereupon they told him that they were looking for Solov'ev, Rasputin's son-in-law. The house was then searched and everything turned upside down; the soldiers tore the Tsar's portraits from the walls and smashed the glass. When they failed to find the man they were looking for, they threatened to take the whole family if Solov'ev did not put in an appearance. So Solov'ev saw that there was nothing to be done but to abandon his incognito. The soldiers were furious, searched the house again and found a revolver; then they put Solov'ev in the sleigh, without allowing him to say good-bye to anybody, and took him off with them.

When I heard this I felt certain that Solov'ev was not long for this world unless a miracle happened. My own position was critical and unpleasant in the extreme. If the red guards turned up again when I was with the Rasputins, I should have to reveal the fact that, though I might not be the right Solov'ev, I was at least one of the clan, since my papers were

made out in that name. If I had arrived eight hours earlier they would have taken me and not Boris Nikolaevich, since his papers bore a different name.

It was quite clear that I must not remain another moment. Rasputin's daughter gave me bread, butter, and eggs for the journey, and the widow gave me 350 roubles when she heard that my money had only just sufficed to bring me to Pokrovskoe. I thanked them for their hospitality, and went out, followed by their blessings, first to the courtyard, then to the street, where the driver was waiting. A few minutes later I left Pokrovskoe which was at once lost to sight.

I reached Tiumen' next morning without any further adventures and made up my mind to stay there for a little, in order to rest and think quietly over the situation.

With the arrival of the Bolsheviks in Tobol'sk, the position of the Imperial Prisoners had become much more critical. Almost all chance of rescue had now vanished, or had at least become much more difficult. Solov'ev's arrest, which was totally unexpected by me, knocked the bottom out of things. It was as impossible for me to remain here as to return to Tobol'sk or Pokrovskoe; nor could I see any advantage in remaining in Tiumen'.

In any case help must be sent to Their Majesties with all speed. I decided to return to Petersburg to report all that had happened to Markov II and Madame Vyrubova, and show them how Their

Majesties' position had been altered by the arrival of the Bolsheviks in Tobol'sk.

The money in my possession was hardly sufficient for my journey; but what seemed to be more important was getting possession of papers which would justify my return to Petersburg. I had not much time to think about it, and next morning I proceeded to the station. The trains were not running to schedule, but as chance willed: they told me that the train for Ekaterinburg was expected to start at about 1 p.m.

Out of boredom I strolled round the station buildings; when I stepped on to the platform a brand-new train, consisting entirely of saloon carriages, attracted my attention. On one carriage a red rag was displayed, and some very suspicious-looking customers were lounging along the train. They were typical gaol-birds, fellows with dirty fur caps, machine-gun belts slung round their shoulders, and unbuttoned coats. A peasant who, like me, was waiting for a train explained to me that this was a "commissars' train."

I went into the waiting-room where a crowd was huddled together in motley confusion. As I seated myself at the big table in the centre of the room, I suddenly saw a well-known face: opposite me sat a young man in a private's coat with no cockade in his cap. It was T., once a fellow officer of mine at Odessa, whom I had not seen since 1913.

I was not prepared for a meeting and did not know

what would be the best thing to do. After an instant's reflection I decided to disappear before he noticed me. Although I had known T. quite well, I had no idea of what had happened in the intervening years, and what political side he now favoured. It was better to be prudent, so I slowly rose from the table. At that moment T. raised his head, pushed aside the paper he had been reading, and rose also. Our glances met. He stared fixedly at me and cried out:

“Markov, what are you doing here?”

I returned his greeting, then took hold of his sleeve and dragged him on to the platform.

“Please note that my name is not Markov now but Solov'ev; why that is so I will explain later. I remember you as a good comrade and friend, and hope you will not betray me. I have been to Tobol'sk. . . . Do you understand?”

I told him the reason of my stay in Tiumen'. “You can count on me,” was his firm reply. “I understand. But where are you off to now? To Petersburg, eh? Have you the necessary papers?” I had to confess that I hadn't.

“Then, my dear fellow, thank your lucky stars that you met me. What papers have you? Discharge papers from the military command at Ishim? Good! Do you see that train? The station has been occupied for the last three days by the punitive expedition under the redoubtable Zapkus. Everybody who wants a ticket has to show his papers and state

the object of his journey; no tickets are issued without Zapkus's permit. With the papers in your possession you would have run grave danger of arrest."

I felt quite lost and helpless, which fact did not escape T.'s notice.

"Have you no other papers?" he asked.

I replied that I still had my discharge card from the military commander at Odessa. This document was quite genuine, was made out in my own name, and permitted me to stay wherever I wished in Russia. The only revolutionary thing about it was the signature of the commander, which read: "Commandant of the city of Odessa, Ensign Riazanov." I hastily explained all this to T.

"Thank heaven for that," he said. "Now go straight into the town, take a room in a hotel, and report to the military headquarters to-morrow. There you will receive demobilization papers, which will allow you to travel wherever you like."

When T. saw by my face that I was still doubtful, he added: "Don't be afraid. The comrades here are much milder than they are in Russia. Spin them some yarn, say that you are going to try to find a job, or anything else you like. You will find that everything will go smoothly."

I thanked him heartily for his good advice, took an izvoshchik and drove to a hotel. I got a room on the second floor without any difficulty, and signed in the register, "Markov, ex-lieutenant, from Pros-

kurov.'" Next morning, I proceeded to the office of the military headquarters, and I breathed more easily when my papers were exchanged for a discharge card. Then I went to the militia department, and, on the strength of my new papers, asked for a temporary passport. As T. had prophesied, no one in these offices made any difficulties about doing what I asked. In the office of the military headquarters the atmosphere was like that of the good old days: the clerks were sitting steadily at their desks, diligently pounding away at their typewriters. One of them asked me very politely what I wanted and dispatched my business immediately; a second one signed the document without reading it.

From the militia department I proceeded to the telegraph office, and sent a wire to Markov II under a covering address, telling him of my involuntary halt at Tiumen'.

I was charmed with the snow-covered town of Tiumen'. The main thoroughfare of the upper part of the town, the Tsarskaia, was a broad street, lit by electricity, which consisted mainly of one-storey brick houses. In the centre was a square, on which I saw the two-storey block of the secondary school, and a private house like a palace with a large garden. Commerce was concentrated in the main street. Almost everything could be bought in any of the shops, from shoe-polish to fine China silks. Practically no signs of the Revolution were visible; the posters, red flags, and other emblems of the revolu-

tionalist socialist regime were conspicuous by their absence.

The only sign was that on many street corners the old name Tsarskaia Street had been replaced by new red signs with the inscription "Revolution Prospekt" in white letters, and some houses were adorned with plaques inscribed, "Nationalized House No. . . ." These were practically the only traces of the events of the last few months.

On my return to the hotel I caught sight of a visiting card on the board on which the names of the visitors were shown: it read "Colonel P., Commander of the 35th Siberian Rifle Regiment, Garrison Commander of the Town of Tiumen'."

Truly there were remarkable things in this town. A "remnant of the old regime" was living peacefully in the midst of the Bolsheviks. I decided to make his acquaintance. The Colonel received me in a most friendly manner, and seemed very much flattered when I said that, as an officer, I felt it my duty to report to him, as garrison commander. He observed, it is true, that he was no longer a regimental and garrison commander, and that he had handed over his regiment to the newly created staff of the Red Army. At present his former regimental officer, Ensign Chuvikov, was at the head of the staff.

"The comrades are at present trying," he told me, "to build up a new army on new principles. We shall see what will come of it! I am Polish by

birth, and long to return to Poland, but so long as the Germans are there, I am not going. I hate them. So, *nolens volens*, I must stay here and wait for better times."

One day followed another in endless monotony. A dull apathy came over me. My misadventure in Pokrovskoe, the impossibility of getting to Petersburg, and, finally, the silence of Markov II, who had not replied to my telegram, all combined to depress me. My utter ignorance of what was happening in Tobol'sk brought me to the verge of despair. So I remained a week in Tiumen', vacillating and inactive, until one day Colonel P. invited me to tea.

"I have found a good job for you, Sergei Vladimirovich. You need not die of hunger after all! To-day I happened to meet Chuvikov, the ensign of whom I have already spoken to you. He is now chief of staff of the Red Army, and is grumbling because he cannot find an instructor here for his new cavalry detachment. I remembered you and told them that I could help him. What do you think of the idea?"

The colonel noticed my surprise and embarrassment and went on: "I see that my proposal has embarrassed you. I understand that, but you won't be risking anything. You can make a free contract and can resign the job at any time. The pay is not bad. Until you find some other work I advise you to take it on."

I thanked him for his trouble and asked for a day

to consider it. When I was alone I did some hard thinking. Should I accept the job or not? I weighed all the pros and cons, and finally came to the conclusion that I must do it. By taking over the formation of a cavalry detachment it would be possible for me to enrol in my unit all the officers who came from Petersburg from Markov II. The geographical position of Tiumen' was excellent: not only did the railway to Tobol'sk pass through Tiumen', but the waterway by the Tura and the Tobol also ran through Tiumen'. If we had a strong nucleus of our supporters at Tiumen', who could be hidden from the argus eye of the Bolsheviks in the Red Army itself, and would be armed and provided for besides, much might be done. I could try, for example, to have my unit transferred to Tobol'sk to guard the Imperial Family, or could pretend that there was a peasant rising in the neighbourhood of Tobol'sk, and get sent there to crush it.

If I succeeded in finding posts in the Red Army for all the officers who were to be sent to Tobol'sk, and thus providing for them at the expense of the Soviet State, it would be a great financial relief to the organization. I thought about it all night and all the following day. In the evening I went to Colonel P. and told him I was prepared to join the Red Army. He promised to inform Chuvikov immediately. Next morning I wrote to Markov II, and told him in guarded terms that I would perhaps succeed in finding posts which promised great things for us all.

On the way back from the post office I went to the barber's. There was a crowd in the shop and I had to wait. When my turn came a young man in a blue coat and a silk Russian shirt stood up to make room for me. He looked at me and I at him. I could scarcely believe my eyes. It was Solov'ev whom I had been thinking of as dead and buried. We had difficulty in concealing our excitement, but Solov'ev controlled himself, and said in a casual tone:

"It's ages since we've seen each other. You forget us in the end. But come and have a cup of tea with us. You know my address." He gave his address, which of course I did not know. I begged to be excused, pleaded urgent business, but promised to call when I could.

I went straight there from the barber's. He was living on the outskirts of the town with an old woman, an acquaintance of Rasputin's family. He told me how he had been arrested by the red guards. Some of his escort had proposed "to liquidate the son of a dog on the spot," and not to take him to Tiumen' at all, but they were outvoted. On arrival at Tiumen', Solov'ev, when examined, told a long and mysterious but very clever story about the false papers which had been found on him. He said he was a radical anarchist who had, during Kerenskii's Government, deserted the Front and the military service he detested.

His explanations found a sympathetic audience in Nemtsov, the always drunk president of the Tiumen'

Soviet, and his assistant, a toper called Neverov. He contrived to get released but had to bind himself not to leave Tiumen' and to report daily at the Soviet office.

For my part I told Solov'ev all that had happened to me in the fullest detail, my last days in Petersburg, and my experiences in Tobol'sk. Boris Nikolaevich was much surprised to hear of the Empress's order which had sent me back from Tobol'sk to Pokrovskoe. He was even more amazed when I told him of Father Vasil'ev's request that I should pay back the money he had lent me. He got greatly excited over this and cried:

"I can't understand it at all. What Father Vasil'ev said to you was not the truth. It was not his money he lent you, but mine. Before I left Tobol'sk I gave him several thousand roubles to meet various expenditures which might arise in connection with the Imperial Family. It seems to me extremely curious. His methods have displeased me for some time back. Well, we can get on without him."

Solov'ev then began to tell me about the situation of the Imperial Family, which had grown considerably worse since the October of the previous year when he had first come to Tobol'sk bringing presents to Their Majesties from Madame Vyrubova. The frivolity and thoughtlessness of Mademoiselle Khitrovo, who had been arrested immediately after her arrival, had resulted in the removal from office of

the commissar, Makarov. This Makarov, in spite of his revolutionary past, had been well disposed to Their Majesties, whereas his successor, one Pankratov, had no strength of will, and had been relegated to the background by the soldiers' committee as soon as he took up office. This committee had violently assumed control over the Imperial Prisoners, and, at present, a certain Nikol'skiĭ, a typical revolutionary ensign and a demagogue of the mob-orator class, had the chief say in affairs.

The commander of the soldiers was E. S. Kobylinskiĭ, who had been appointed to the post by Kerenskiĭ, and had come to Tobol'sk with his friend, Klavdiia Mikhailovna Bitner. With regard to Kobylinskiĭ, Solov'ev could say nothing very definite. His attitude to Their Majesties was correct and reserved, and theirs to him was similar. On the whole he was not a man of any great strength of character, and he had no influence, let alone any power, over his men. Mademoiselle Bitner had been received by Their Majesties, and was at present giving lessons to the Grand Duchesses and the Tsesarevich. Solov'ev believed that the Colonel would raise no difficulties in the event of a forcible abduction of the Imperial Family, but neither would he give any assistance.

The official authority in Tobol'sk was in the hands of the workers' council, which was mainly composed of social-revolutionaries and had very few Bolshevik members. But the power of the council was really

insignificant; the real ruler in the town was the soldiers' committee, which could rely on the bayonets of the only military detachment.

Among the soldiers there were many who were loyal to the Imperial Family, a fact not without influence on the others. Long and close connection with Their Majesties had caused the men gradually to lose their specifically revolutionary complexion. Of the eight officers only two were to be depended on. In general, therefore, the position before the Bolshevik upheaval, if not very favourable, had at least not been hopeless.

But when the Government passed into the hands of the Bolsheviks, there was a fundamental change in the situation. Despatches began to come from Petersburg to Tobol'sk in which the Soviet Government proposed alterations in Their Majesties' mode of life. The former head of the committee was sent back to Petersburg, and his place was taken by an ensign, Matveev by name. This uneducated, almost illiterate man came from the "red metropolis," and had already secured the Bolshevik blessing. According to his own account Lenin himself had made him an ensign. He ordered the retainers, who had at first lived apart, to move into the Governor's House, where there was already too little room, and then proceeded to reduce rations, which had been felt very severely.

Boris Nikolaevich had up to the present succeeded in various ways in conveying 50,000 roubles to

Their Majesties, partly his own money, partly his wife's, and partly Madame Vyrubova's. Some Tobol'sk merchants also helped Their Majesties, and the whole of the population supplied them with food according to their means. Bishop Hermogen and the monks of the neighbouring monasteries lavished all possible help and consolation on the unhappy martyrs.

The most revolting of all was the behaviour of most of the servants. They took no account of the difficulties of the situation, but demanded full payment of their wages, expressed their dissatisfaction with the food, frequently got drunk, and did not even stop at stealing. I was particularly horrified at Boris Nikolaevich's account of the heroic deeds of Dereven'ko, the Tsesarevich's sailor-attendant. He had refused to come to Tobol'sk with them, and remained peacefully at Tsarskoe Selo. At Tobol'sk his trunk was found and opened, revealing underclothing and shoes which Dereven'ko must have been abstracting for years from the Heir Apparent's wardrobe.

The imprudent behaviour of Father Vasil'ev in the Blagoveshchenskaia Church during the Christmas services had done Their Majesties a lot of harm. They were no longer allowed to go to church, and people began to feel very suspicious. The Soviet saw conspiracies everywhere, and both Matveev and his young soldiers, who had replaced the old guards, suspected Father Vasil'ev of being an agent of the

counter-revolution. Free access to the Imperial Family was forbidden him, and intercourse between him and the prisoners had to be carried on through a servant, Kirpichnikov. This latter Boris Nikolaevich described as a most devoted man, who belonged to the lowest rank of servants, and who had shown Their Majesties great kindness. He also contrived to be on good terms with the committee and the whole of the guards.

Father Alexei plainly wished to play the part of saviour and benefactor. Solov'ev said he could do what he liked so long as he did not interfere. Although the guards were now entirely reconstituted, even among the new ones there were thirty men on whom one could rely for assistance in liberating Their Majesties.

This concluded Solov'ev's description of the position, and he then proceeded to discuss the possibility of rescuing the prisoners. The organizations in Russia had so far taken no definite steps to save the Imperial Family. Solov'ev's inquiries had not discovered a single trace of any organization of loyalists in the Tobol'sk district. The chief aid had come from Madame Vyrubova, who had sent a quantity of necessary things to the Imperial Family. She had also been successful in establishing secret communication with the prisoners, in which Solov'ev, as her agent, had played the chief part.

Rasputin's son-in-law had, moreover, accomplished more than that. He had contrived to organ-

ize a group of loyal and devoted adherents in Tobol'sk and the neighbourhood, and to establish points of communication along the entire Tobol'sk-Tiumen' road, where his followers were stationed, and through which passed the whole of the correspondence between him and the prisoners.

After lengthy efforts he had even succeeded, by winning over an official, in establishing a continuous and effective supervision over the Tobol'sk post and telegraph office. The post and telegraph office in Tiumen' was also under his eye, so that even the cipher telegrams of the Tiumen' Soviet held no secrets for him.

Solov'ev was amazed when I told him of the position of Markov II's Petersburg organization and its lack of funds. I also informed him of how Markov II had demanded money from Madame Vyrubova, and openly told her that the organization had no funds at its disposal.

"I cannot understand it at all," said Solov'ev. "It simply passes my comprehension. To judge by what you say, the organization was created in May of last year; since then a whole year has elapsed, and in all this time Markov has not been able to collect the necessary money! That is perfectly absurd! In these circumstances what business had Markov to reproach Madame Vyrubova with inactivity? I can confirm that she has done everything in her power."

I also found it curious that Markov II had not yet succeeded in collecting money for the organization,

especially as the organization came into being when there was still some sort of order in the banking world. We could only surmise that Markov II was not popular in the circles which would otherwise have been ready to put money at the disposal of the Imperial Family.

We then discussed all the advantages which might accrue from my joining the Red Army, and Solov'ev approved of my decision. At the end of our long conference he warned me against visiting him too frequently, and we decided to see each other in the theatre two days later, where our meeting would attract little attention in the crowd.

CHAPTER 13

COMRADE MARKOV, RED OFFICER

Now began the strangest phase of my counter-revolutionary activity: I became an officer in the Red Army!

After my visit to Solov'ev I called on Colonel P., who told me they were expecting me at the Staff Headquarters of the Red Army. Four o'clock actually found me sitting in the office waiting for the arrival of the Chief of Staff, "Comrade" Chuvikov. Finally he appeared and proved to be a thick-set, strongly-built man, clean-shaven, brown-haired, and wearing an officer's uniform with no epaulettes.

He received me in his room in a friendly manner, and asked me in what unit and how long I had served and what was the object of my stay in Tiumen'. I repeated the old stories, which seemed to satisfy him. Chuvikov, on the whole, impressed me as a man of strong character, who, if he had had a better education, would have made an excellent organizer.

He was, however, self-taught and had been washed up by the tide of Revolution. He had been appointed quite unexpectedly to this independent and responsible post, to which he was now desperately clinging. Bolshevism had made him a great man, and so his

slogan was "Long live Bolshevism." If he had been given a monarchist battalion and the rank of a lieutenant-colonel, he would have sung "God save the Tsar" with equal enthusiasm.

I sat and listened to his complacent stories of his past, considering all the time what I should say if he were to take it into his head to question me about my political views. Our conversation was interrupted by the sudden entrance of a new personality, a man in uniform with three ribbons of the Order of St. George and three wound-stripes sewn on to his sleeve.

"Allow me to introduce my military commissar, Comrade Permiakov," said Chuvikov, turning to me.

Comrade Permiakov was a man about thirty, thick-set, with a high forehead and deep set, steel-grey, inexpressive eyes. The only striking thing about him was his hair, which was brushed back from his forehead, and fell, with poetic untidiness, to his shoulder. In appearance he was a caricature of a nihilist of last century.

"You are prepared then to undertake the formation of a squadron, comrade?" he asked me in a deep bass voice.

I replied in the affirmative, whereupon he immediately asked me what was my attitude to the present state of affairs. Now was the time to hoist my slacks. I declared that the watchwords of the Soviet Government, "Down with the war" and "Peace at

any price" were, as experience showed, in complete harmony with the sentiments of the working-class and peasant population. The majority of the nation had adopted these watchwords, and, along with them, the Government which was their author. The old army had ceased to exist; therefore, a new one must be created, not to fight against foreign foes, who no longer existed officially since the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, but rather to maintain order at home. That was my point of view, I declared, and also the motive which made me ready to undertake the formation of a squadron. It was necessary to give the citizens of the town in which it was to be formed a good example of the new regime. I developed this thesis in long, high-sounding sentences, full of fire and energy, and, on the conclusion of my remarks, I was honoured with the approval of the Comrade Commissar.

Next day, when I joined the staff, I read on the orders of the day that Comrade Markov had been appointed commander of the first Tiumen' Ulan squadron and chief cavalry instructor as from 1st April, with pay at 500 roubles a month. Now I was really enrolled in the Red Army.

When I asked Chuvikov why the squadron was to be called ulans, and not hussars or dragoons, he told me that this had been done on the personal request of Comrade Permiakov. I did not wish to make difficulties and merely wondered; but very soon I ceased wondering about anything, the best course in my position. I obeyed all the Commissar's orders,

even the most absurd, and ultimately this led to the best results.

The "formation" of the squadron began with the enrolment of various not very reassuring customers, in semi-military garb, at staff headquarters. As the squadron, including the horses and other equipment consisted at that time solely of myself, there was nothing to be done but enter their names in a book and send them away again. I kept only one, a man called Koval'chuk, whom it was my intention to make the sergeant-major of the company which still existed only on paper.

Of all those who had given in their names, only eight were regular cavalrymen. According to their own accounts they had been mounted messengers attached to various infantry regiments, and were East Siberians by birth. Koval'chuk came from the Kostroma Government, and I took an immediate liking to him. He told me that there was no suitable stabling to be found in the town, and he called my attention to an abandoned brickworks outside the town, the long drying-rooms of which could very easily be converted into stables. I went to see it and found that Koval'chuk was right; only one thing was lacking; there was, it was true, plenty of room for the horses, but the quarters for the men were more than inadequate.

I decided, however, to remain at the brickworks, for there I should not be in direct contact with my strict superior officers; moreover, the lack of suit-

able barracks would make it necessary to build huts, which would inevitably delay the formation of the unit. This last was my real aim and object.

I found that the "comrades" had a certain partiality for American methods. I told Permiakov in the evening that I had discovered suitable quarters, and lo and behold! the very next morning a detachment of prisoners of war, equipped with tools and materials, appeared at the brickworks to begin converting the drying-rooms into stables. But the work did not proceed very rapidly, as the workmen preferred to smoke and swear, and made no progress. I confined my activities to instructing the gang-leader in what had to be done and the methods to be followed. Otherwise I let Koval'chuk supervise the work, and rested on my laurels.

At the very beginning of my new duties I took pains to get into touch with all my superior officers. What chiefly astonished me was the organization of the local military authorities. It was soon clear that the military commissar, Permiakov, was not the sole authority, but merely a member of a board consisting of two persons, himself, and one Riazanov. Permiakov's educational deficiencies were, as it were, made up by Riazanov, who was a delicate-looking, fair man, with unsteady unpleasant little eyes, an ex-first-lieutenant in one of the Siberian rifle regiments.

I saw at once that one would always have to be on one's guard with him. Theoretically, he was a

convinced Bolshevik who had not finished his university course, a typical representative of our revolutionary intelligentsia. He had devoted his whole mind to revolutionary theories, and now had come the happy moment in which he could put these ideas into practice. Chuvikov had also an assistant in the economic sphere, an Ensign Osipov, a typical Odessa profiteer, for whom no job was too dirty. He was hardly to be described as a Bolshevik, and had merely accepted the post in order to enrich himself through contracts and the sale of agrarian property. Later I became convinced that his chief, the honourable Chuvikov, also had a share in his transactions.

Besides these there were Chuvikov's two adjutants, Ensigns Vysokovskii and Kashin. Vysokovskii was a colourless creature, entirely without principles, for whom everything was all right as long as he got his pay. Kashin, on the other hand, during the whole of my time in Tiumen', remained for me a book with seven seals. He had enjoyed a wider education than any of the rest, his manners were good, he said very little about himself, and sometimes seemed a crabbed Bolshevik, and sometimes gave the impression of being a man who was playing his part under compulsion. I soon became sure that his political views were those of the Right; but he served his new masters honestly, and conducted his office, if not in a model fashion, at least satisfactorily.

Finally, I may mention the four company commanders and the commander of the machine-gun

section. All these officers were ex-ensigns, not Bolsheviks, who were merely serving for the sake of the pay. What revolted me about them was their zeal. I was and still am of opinion that it is not a crime for ex-officers to have taken service in the Red Army, but, on the contrary, a most useful proceeding, if only one contrives to pursue one's own ends. Of course, that is not always possible, but in Tiumen' our immediate superiors were such laymen in military matters that you could fool them as you pleased; their understanding was limited to the externals of the service.

On paper quite a respectable fighting force existed: there were companies, machine-gun sections, cavalry and transport. In reality, however, there were only 225 members of the Red Army altogether (a company numbered sixty men), eight Ulans with one horse, two dummy machine guns, and twenty men in the transport and two transport wagons. Such was the Red Army of the Tiumen' Soviet at the beginning of April. In addition, there was a Red Guard 300 strong under the leadership of an ex-criminal; this guard was under the direct control of the Tiumen' Soviet.

When I had got rather more accustomed to my new environment, I was more at ease. Koval'chuk supervised the work on the principle "the slower you go, the quicker you arrive." I watched all that happened on the staff and got all the news. I met Solov'ev in the theatre nearly every day; a pretty

fair company for the provinces was giving very good performances, which were very well attended. In this way we were able to meet when we liked without attracting attention and discuss the news. No one had yet arrived from Petersburg nor had I had any reply to my letters, which made me most uneasy.

At the end of my first week's service the strength of my squadron had increased to thirty men. I received for my men fifty carbines which were all in want not only of cleaning but also of repairs, and, in addition, Permiakov congratulated me on the receipt of two rusty swords of an antediluvian pattern. They had been the village policemen's swords which had been taken from them in 1917, and had been lying in the arsenal ever since. They were completely useless for drilling purposes, since they were very difficult to get out of the sheath, and, besides, the sheaths themselves were in danger of falling to pieces. All of which suited me very well.

For drill the procedure was as follows: Koval'chuk took my Ulans out every day for half an hour and put them through infantry drill. In addition I had been given two assistants which did not alter the position. One of these, Gusev by name, represented himself as an ex-ensign in an infantry regiment. He was not stupid, was serving apparently for the sake of the pay, and in appearance and behaviour reminded me of a typical subaltern transport officer. Thanks to his cunning he contrived to secure privileges and to save something for himself

when foraging. He was also one of those people who, in their intercourse with their superiors, restrict themselves to the formulae: "As you wish" and "As you command."

My second assistant was assigned to me in the very early days of my stay in Tiumen'. Simonenko, for such was his name, was only eighteen; his mother, a widow, lived in Tiumen'. He had wanted to join up in the summer of 1917, and was enrolled as a one-year volunteer in a reserve regiment. He was very proud of being able to wear a uniform and of clanking about the streets in his spurs. On the whole he was a nice fellow, not entirely uneducated, but as stupid as could be, which suited me very well. As my subordinate he had not the nerve to question me about the real reason for my serving in the Red Army, and he obeyed all my orders with the utmost punctiliousness. It was an excellent thing for me that he had no idea of military service and, in consequence, could not undermine my authority.

In addition to the swords I also received about twenty saddles; when I caught sight of them, however, I put up my hands in amazement. They were not saddles, but caricatures of saddles, the product of native industry, of various sizes and shapes. Instead of stirrups they were provided with running knots of rope, and they had no proper padding or lining. Even if I had had horses at my disposal, drilling with these saddles would have been a sheer impossibility. Simultaneously with the issue of the

saddles, I was instructed to make my choice from the supply of horses, the existence of which I had never suspected.

I duly went to inspect the horse depot, and was once again pleasantly surprised by my superiors' complete incomprehension of military matters. In a large courtyard, which had been a dumping ground for manure since the beginning of the Revolution, about a hundred little Siberian horses were running about. I was sick and sorry to see the state the poor creatures were in. They were walking shadows, hardly able to stand on their feet; they had not been groomed for months and were plastered with dirt and dung. Half the stalls were in a state of utter neglect; the other half had been torn down and used for firewood. I saw at once that they were not cavalry but transport horses, which had never carried a rider on their backs.

In the office of the depot I made the acquaintance of its head, Captain Markarov. He was an old officer who had been summoned from retirement to fill this post. From his supply of horses he equipped the transport sections of the Siberian rifle regiments and the artillery. When he heard of the object of my visit he was amazed, and could only say: "Perhaps you will succeed in making riding horses out of this material."

I replied that we were living in times of unlimited possibilities, as was evidenced by the elevation of a modest subaltern officer like myself to the position of

squadron commander. The captain looked at me suspiciously, and mumbled: "Yes, yes, many strange things are happening."

I grasped at once that he shared my sentiments and I was no longer surprised at the condition of the stables. The captain deliberately did only what was absolutely necessary to keep the horses alive, nothing more, because he did not wish to place any useful material at the disposal of the comrades. With his help I chose about seventy horses, which looked as if they might be of some use, and left them with him until my stables should be ready.

On 10th April, quite by chance, I ran into my old regimental comrade, Sedov, whom Markov II had instructed me to find. Instead of an elegant captain with a pleasant face, always immaculately shaved, and with grey-blue, merry eyes, I saw a ragged fellow in a greasy coat, patched grey-blue trousers, with hair that had not known a barber's hand for many months, and wearing a moustache and a goatee beard. His expression was quite changed and clearly told of great suffering; the fire of his eyes was completely extinguished.

Nevertheless, we recognized each other at once. We left the chemist's shop where we had encountered each other, and arranged to meet immediately at Solov'ev's. An hour later we were all three seated in his warm room round the hissing samovar. Poor Sedov must have gone through terrible hardships on the journey to Tiumen', where he had now been

staying for three weeks. He had come there in order to join the General Labourers' Union because, in this capacity, he had a prospect of finding work with a local house-owner. The poor fellow had evidently had some shocking experiences, for he was highly nervous and hypersensitive. His perpetual fear of being recognized had resulted in his entirely losing the manners of good society and transforming himself into a proletarian, not only in appearance, but also in gestures and speech.

Solov'ev and I told him of our plans and we took council together about our next steps. We decided to await the arrival of the other officers, and to bring the position to the knowledge of Markov II by means of the first of these to arrive. Sedov wished to remain at his work and not to join my squadron, as I proposed. His appearance and his papers, which were quite in order, protected him in the best possible way. His one wish was to reach Tobol'sk and see Their Majesties, a wish which he afterwards realized.

Solov'ev had recently been in a state of continual agitation: he was expecting his wife to arrive from Petersburg, and also a French engineer, Bronard by name, with whom he had business dealings. The Frenchman was employed in the Kutim gold mines, and was supposed to be bringing Solov'ev a considerable sum of money. Solov'ev was much annoyed at the delay, as he was in urgent need of the money. Moreover, Bronard did not know his address, and it was conceivable that he would apply

to the local authorities for it, a thing which Solov'ev by no means desired. In view of this Solov'ev wrote a few lines to Bronard, which I was to leave at the Hotel Rossiia.

I don't know why, but as Solov'ev was writing the letter I felt a sort of uneasiness. I remarked that perhaps it was unnecessary to mention my name in the letter; but Solov'ev replied that, although Bronard was not a member of our organization, he was a trustworthy person, who, moreover, did not bother his head about politics. I took the letter to the Hotel Rossiia and told the porter that if M. Bronard arrived, he was to come straight to me. It was my job to give M. Bronard Solov'ev's address, and tell him that Solov'ev had had some unpleasant passages with the Soviets. All through I could not get rid of an uncomfortable feeling, a foreboding that this letter in the Hotel Rossiia would have unfortunate results.

Meanwhile the stables were ready: my Ulans were living in a house near by and spending the whole day doing nothing; but the large office was piled with documents on the subject. To all appearances an immense amount of work had been done; there were boards everywhere with inscriptions such as "squadron office" and "arsenal," and the corridors and walls were covered with arrows pointing in all directions.

One morning Permiakov and Chuvikov arrived to hold an inspection. They were accompanied by

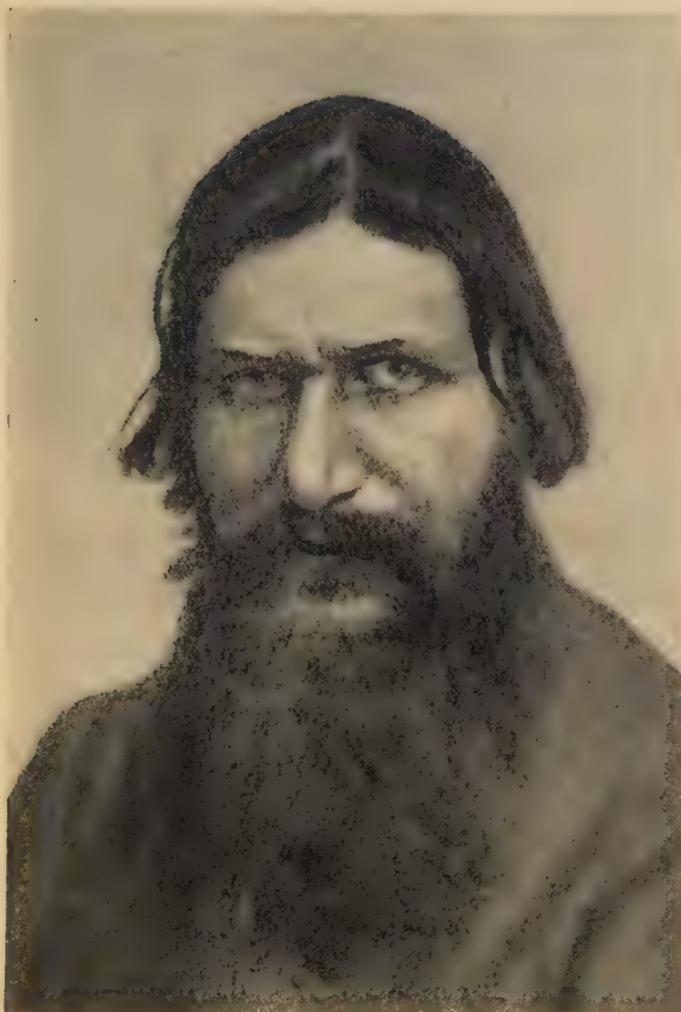
a female with short hair, a most mannish person, with a cigarette in her mouth, and possessed of a deep bass voice. She was the town architect and surveyor. Everything was found in perfect order; Permiakov was particularly charmed with the long rows of stalls which had room for eighty-five horses. Then we proceeded to inspect the barracks. Chuvikov asked me what I intended to do when the squadron was at full strength, and I declared that the chief requirement was the erection of wooden hutments. The "comrade-architect" was asked to advise, and, after figuring in a notebook for a considerable time, she said that the erection of three wooden hutments for from 140 to 160 men would cost about 80,000 roubles.

"Is your estimate not too high?" asked Permiakov; but the comrade confirmed the sum. Then Permiakov turned to Chuvikov:

"Well, shall we build or not?"

Chuvikov said that the town treasury possessed too little money; it was hardly sufficient to pay salaries, and credit would be but sparingly forthcoming. Finally, it was decided to quarter the Red Army men, or, as Permiakov enthusiastically called them, "the volunteers," in the big barracks, and to keep the horses in the open air, tied to cross-beams.

The fruit of a fortnight's work was thus destroyed in a twinkling. However, for reasons that will be readily understood, I made no protest, but rather declared that I quite appreciated these "considera-



G. E. RASPUTIN—THE “NEW MAN”



B. N. SOLOV'EV



J. A. DEN
Kellomiaki (Finland) 1917

tions of economy." Under Koval'chuk's skilful hand, by evening all our building and repairing was demolished with axe and spade. Next day I greeted a great heap of ruins, the proof of my zealous activity in the service of the Soviet Republic.

CHAPTER 14

ARRESTED BY THE SOVIET

NEXT morning, while I was having breakfast, there was a knock at my door. A complete stranger stepped—or rather burst—into my room.

“Are you Mr. Markov?”

I replied that I was. Without allowing me to get a word in, the unknown gentleman overwhelmed me with a veritable spate of words. He was little and bald, with a reddish moustache and piercing eyes. From his pronunciation and the clumsiness with which he put his sentences together, I recognized that I was dealing with a foreigner, the long-awaited M. Bronard, in fact.

I gathered from what he said that he had been in Tiumen’ for a day, and, as chance would have it, had put up, not at the Hotel Rossiia, but at a little inn near mine. He had proceeded to the militia administration to inquire for Solov’ev’s address, and had then called on Solov’ev, but had not found him at home. He had had some conversation with Solov’ev’s wife, who told him that her husband had been arrested once already and had to report to the

Soviet every day. She also told him that there was a note for him at the Hotel Rossiia.

It was also clear, from Bronard's voluble and incoherent words, that he had brought no money with him, and that, on the contrary, he was going to demand money from Solov'ev. He had already inquired about Solov'ev and me at the Soviet office. I could not contain myself and began to storm at him:

"Are you out of your mind? Are you a child? How ever could you couple my name with Solov'ev's and make inquiries about us at the Soviet?"

The flow of Bronard's eloquence dried up. He asked me quite meekly whether Solov'ev had left money for him with me; I was speechless with surprise at his question. One thing was clear: this Bronard was either an *agent provocateur* or a blockhead. In any case, his conduct had seriously compromised us.

At this juncture someone knocked at the door; it was my assistant Simonenko, with whom I had arranged to go to the horse depot. In his presence I told Bronard in a sharp tone that I had no connection with Solov'ev, who had merely asked me to give him, Bronard, certain information, and I recommended Bronard to apply to Solov'ev in person. I had merely wished to do Solov'ev a kindness by leaving the letter at the hotel. Bronard muttered something into his moustache and departed, whereupon Simonenko and I left the house.

I thought over all that Bronard had said, and came to the conclusion that this time things were bound to go wrong. When I came home I destroyed everything which could compromise me. Then the son of Father Vasil'ev turned up quite unexpectedly; I told him briefly that a misunderstanding had arisen through the arrival of someone, which exposed both Solov'ev and myself to the danger of arrest, and asked him to inform his father.

After lunch I lay down for a little, but, almost immediately, two figures burst into my room without knocking, a half-grown lad in a military coat with a revolver in his hand, and a giant in a fur coat and skin cap, with a sword at his side, a machine-gun cartridge belt round his shoulders, and a carbine in his hand. The younger of the two shouted at me:

“Are you Comrade Markov?”

I rose and asked with exaggerated coolness what was the object of their visit.

“Take your hand out of your pocket,” was all I got for an answer.

By accident I had kept my right hand in my trouser pocket, and this had alarmed our heroes. The younger man calmed down when he saw that I was not going to offer any resistance, and informed me that, by order of the chairman of the Soviet, he had to search my rooms and take me away. My uninvited guests made a thorough search, but of course found nothing; they took away only my pocket-book, in which were photographs of my

father and Madame Den, and a few papers of no importance. I then had to pack my things and go with them; my money, about eight and a half roubles, I was allowed to keep.

I took only a small bundle, containing a towel, a tooth-brush and tooth-paste, a cake of soap, a little ikon, and the Empress's prayer-book. Fortunately, I had given the Empress's letter, the postcard for Madame Vyrubova, and the little cigarette-holder to the woman in whose house Solov'ev was lodging to keep for me. I could not take any underclothing with me, as I had sent it to the wash the day before.

The porter assumed a stupid expression when he saw me coming down the stairs escorted by two Red soldiers. An izvoshchik was standing in front of the hotel, and a horse was tied to a telegraph pole. The big man mounted the horse, while the young one took his seat beside me in the cab. When the driver asked where he was to go to, I replied: "To the prison."

My neighbour looked at me in amazement, and murmured:

"No, no, comrade, what put that into your head?"

We drove through the streets. Behind us trotted the giant on his broken-down hack. All the passers-by stared after us. We stopped in front of the Soviet building. My escort got out and told me to wait. After a little he came back and ordered the driver to go to the prison. I could not resist saying ironically:

"I was right then, comrade? It was the correct address after all?"

He made no reply. We came to a standstill before a large, three-storey house, surrounded by a high whitewashed wall. The big gate opened and we drove into the courtyard.

I was evidently expected at the office, for the instant he saw me, the clerk took in my name without asking me for it. My money was taken away, and I was given a receipt. I had also to leave my braces behind. After being searched I was handed over to the warder on duty.

The lad who had arrested me received a receipt for my safe delivery, and bade me a very polite good day. I was then led along a long corridor to the door of a cell. This then was my new home, cell 5! The door was locked behind me and I was alone.

The cell was five paces long by two and a half broad. The furniture consisted of a long bench which was turned into a couch at night. A large barred window set in the wall at the height of a man's head gave on to the courtyard of the prison; from it only trees and the roofs of the taller houses behind the high wall could be seen. In the courtyard a sentry was pacing up and down. The cell was clean and had been recently whitewashed. It smelt of damp and was very cold; but there was no trace of any means of warming it.

I had hardly had time to have a good look round

my new dwelling when a bell rang in the corridor. Very soon I heard the opening of a door, the rattling of keys, and the sound of voices, among which I recognized Solov'ev's. Someone said quite close to my door:

"That one has just been taken. Number 7 is vacant."

After that the cell door was shut, the lock creaked, then all was quiet again.

So I was right in my suspicions: Bronard had betrayed both of us to the Bolsheviks. But what could he have told them? How had he connected us? These questions gave me no peace, for our arrest might in certain circumstances have unpleasant consequences for the Imperial Family; moreover, it cut off all connection with Tobol'sk. If Grünwald and Andreevskii, Madame Vyrubova's emissaries, came to Tiumen' they would have to remain without any news, as we should be unable to get into touch with them. All the hopes and plans we had built upon my joining the Red Army were ruined. I cursed the moment when Solov'ev had written that letter to Bronard, for, without it, only Solov'ev would have been arrested.

Our present plight seemed to me quite hopeless: only a miracle could save us from death. I was terribly sorry for poor Mara Grigor'evna, Solov'ev's wife; I could so well imagine what she was feeling. At our first meeting she had made a very favourable impression on me. She had golden hair, was tall,

with a marvellous figure, but somewhat irregular features. You could not call her really beautiful, but there was something uncommonly sympathetic about her; her steel-grey, intelligent eyes, in particular, were most attractive. She loved her husband, passionately and jealously, and he returned her feelings in kind.

Evening had come on and it was twilight in my cell, when suddenly the door opened, and a figure in prison garb entered, accompanied by a warder. I thought at first that I was to have a cell-mate, but this was not the case. They were bringing me a sack and a cushion filled with straw, a sheet made of peasant linen, an inadequate piece of coating which was to serve me as a blanket, and a towel. I was pleasantly surprised to find that all the things were new and had never been used.

About five o'clock steps could be heard in the corridor and the opening and shutting of cell doors. When my door was opened I was faced with a regular company, a gentleman of presentable appearance in uniform, a person in military uniform, and the warder on duty. The gentleman said good day to me very politely, and then whispered to the man in military uniform, while the warder made some sort of note. It was the ordinary daily inspection. The gentleman in uniform was the director of the prison, while the man in military uniform was the prison commissar.

About half-past five I heard more noises, and the

cry: "Kasha, parasha, boiling water!" echoed along the corridor.

I grasped that the evening meal was being served out; but the meaning of the word "parasha" remained incomprehensible for the moment.

The lock grated and I was let out into the corridor. There I saw two big buckets, one filled with groats and the other with boiling water; two convicts were serving out the food. I was given a tin basin, a tin mug, and a wooden spoon. The other prisoners gazed at me with curiosity, which was intensified by the fact that I was wearing civilian clothes. When they noticed that I had not a tea tin, they said sympathetically that I should be very badly off without one. I was then given kasha¹ and half a pound of black bread. I was returning to my cell, when the warder said:

"Don't forget to take a parasha with you!"

When he observed my blank look he pointed to some buckets provided with lids which stood in a corner of the passage, and at last I saw light, and took one of these necessary utensils with me. About six o'clock the prisoner who had brought the bedding came back and favoured me with a kerosene lamp.

I looked at the kasha. Even the appearance of this dish was not particularly appetizing, but when I tasted it I involuntarily spat it out. It was a repulsive mess from which a musty sweetish smell emanated. I decided to content myself with the bread.

¹ A kind of gruel.

I now began to feel the lack of a tea tin, as I had neither tea nor drinking water. There was nothing else to do but to get my bed ready. I blessed the fact that I had brought a long heavy coat and a skin cap with ear flaps with me; otherwise the cold would have prevented me from sleeping. Even as it was, although I was both physically and mentally fatigued, I hardly got any sleep all night. Everything was as quiet as the grave; I could hear my own pulse beating, and only occasionally did the footsteps of the warder in the corridor become audible.

The day began with another distribution of boiling water, and the prisoners were permitted to go to the lavatory one by one. About five o'clock I wanted to go to wash, but the warder told me I must possess my soul in patience till six. Then I expected to be taken before the examining magistrate, but not a soul appeared. Shortly before midday I heard the well-known voice: "Cell No. 7 to come out." Someone coughed violently: it was Solov'ev. I waited a few minutes and then tried to get permission to come out myself, so as to meet Solov'ev in the lavatory, but I had no luck; they did not let me out until Solov'ev was back in his cell.

On the window-sill in the lavatory the secret sign of our organization at once caught my eye. I examined the whole wall, which was strewn with the *graffiti* usual in such places. At last I caught sight of our sign again, and a hastily scrawled line or two:

"Bronard merely handed over the letter, nothing else. We made each other's acquaintance in Tiumen'. Insist. . . ." I could not decipher any of the rest except the last sentence: "Do you understand?" I rubbed out the writing and the sign, and wrote underneath: "I understand."

I returned to my cell with a somewhat lighter heart. This contact with Boris Nikolaevich, slight though it was, gave me new strength. But my mind was in confusion, for I did not understand, in spite of what I had written on the wall. What did the sentence, "We made each other's acquaintance in Tiumen'" mean? We had known each other in Petersburg! I did not doubt that Bronard had handed over the letter. The words "nothing else" meant, I supposed, that Bronard knew nothing of the organization or of Solov'ev's activities.

Soon after this lunch arrived; it consisted only of soup, which was really dirty, evil-smelling water with some half raw potatoes in it. I had to hold my nose before I could gulp down this soup. Evening came again, with the inevitable: "Kasha, parasha, boiling water!" I refused to take part in the general constitutional, and from my window saw Solov'ev walking round the yard all alone. Each cell had to go into the yard separately regardless of how many inhabitants it had. In this way I was able to see the whole prison population; with the exception of Solov'ev and myself, who were still wearing civilian clothes, all the rest were in regulation prison garb.

So the day passed. When evening came I saw with regret that my evening meal was again to consist only of bread and cold water, for this time I refused the kasha altogether. It was quite clear that I could not keep well for long on this diet: I must try to get into the prison hospital, where the food would be sure to be better. I began poking my injured ear with a match, in order to promote the secretion of pus, and then I decided to stage a fit. I very soon succeeded amazingly well in producing convulsions, shivers, and blood-stained foam; the warder got a terrible fright, and, with the help of another warder who was passing, began to make cold compresses for me.

After long and laborious efforts on their part I quietened down; but I groaned the whole night long. Next morning I was taken to the prison doctor, who, although I could not persuade him to send me to hospital, at least ordered me better food.

Shortly before lunch my door opened. I could scarcely believe my eyes, for it was no other than Solov'ev who came into my cell. He was as amazed as I was. It was only later that I learned that the director of the prison, after my supposed fit, had asked the permission of the prison commissar to have Solov'ev transferred to my cell. The director had held his post since before the Revolution, whereas the commissar had been a cook at one of the big Siberian railway stations; he had lost his post as a result of the war, and had joined the Bolsheviks to

advance his own interests. The director saw that we were not ordinary criminals, but people who had merely come into his power as a result of the present regime. For this reason he had asked the commissar, who was not a bad fellow, to allow us to be together.

Solov'ev now told me exactly what Bronard had done, and how our arrest had come about. Bronard had called on him, but had not found him at home. Thereupon Bronard demanded 25,000 roubles from Mara Grigor'evna, with the threat that he would betray her husband to the Bolsheviks if she did not give him the money. Madame Solov'eva was not a little surprised at this, as she was aware that her husband was expecting money from Bronard. Suspecting nothing she had at first received him in a most friendly way, and asked him whether he had received the letter at the Hotel Rossiia, and whether he had got Solov'ev's address from me. Finally, she asked him in all innocence whether he had brought the expected sum of money with him.

Bronard then demanded money from her with shameless effrontery, and, when the poor woman swore by all the saints that neither she nor her husband had any money, he demanded her jewellery. When this attempt also failed, he became angry and said he would get money from me. He then took a cab and drove to my hotel.

Solov'ev was at once seized by Red Guards and taken to the Soviet Department. There he was told that they had incontestable proofs of his connection

with me, and must keep him in prison until the question of our relations was cleared up.

When we had discussed our position we agreed that we must stick to our assertion that our acquaintance had begun in Tiumen', and that my delivering of the letter to Bronard was merely an act of courtesy to Solov'ev. Solov'ev decided to write a letter to Nemtsov, the president of the Soviet, representing his relations to Bronard in a harmless light. For my part I wrote to Chuvikov, and explained that I had made Solov'ev's acquaintance in the theatre.

Days passed quite without incident. Mara Grigor'evna received permission to bring food to her husband, and, after we had been sharing the cell for three days, she was also allowed to spend ten minutes with him every day. The poor woman wept when she was with her husband; but she contrived to pass him a little note from Sedov, in which he informed us that he was going to Tobol'sk. At the same time he sent us, through Madame Solov'eva, a bear's ham, which for a time relieved us of all anxiety about our food..

On the same day we had another distraction; we were permitted to go to night mass in the prison chapel; it was the fifth Saturday in Lent. We met several prisoners in the corridor who like ourselves were going to mass. One of them came up to me, clapped me on the shoulder, and said: "Comrade, are you here for theft too?" He was greatly surprised when I told him that I was merely a "political."

CHAPTER 15

BISHOP AND CONSPIRATOR

DURING the endless hours we were locked up together, Solov'ev gave me a full account of his experiences in the past year, in which I was particularly interested in what he had done to help the Imperial Family.

Very soon after the removal of the Tsar and his Family to Tobol'sk, he decided to follow them, and, on the journey, had met with adventures very similar to mine: packed trains, dilapidated carriages, undisciplined, blustering soldiers, disputes with the police at the stations, and almost intolerable cold. But, finally, he arrived safely at Tiumen', where his mother-in-law, Rasputin's widow, and his brother-in-law, Dimitriï, were delighted to see him. "They bombarded me with questions which I had difficulty in answering," Solov'ev told me. "But when I was alone with my mother and brother-in-law, I informed them of the real object of my journey. For their part they warned me that a stay in Tobol'sk would not be without peril as, since the arrival of certain officers and a lady, the authorities had been taking drastic measures against all strangers. Finally, we decided that I should go to Tobol'sk next day,

disguised as a merchant, accompanied by my brother-in-law."

The morning after his arrival in Tobol'sk, Solov'ev went to the Cathedral, where mass was being celebrated, the priest officiating being none other than Bishop Hermogen, Rasputin's first patron, and afterwards his deadly enemy. After mass the whole congregation went up to the Bishop, in order that he might bless them individually, and Solov'ev did the same. "My heart was thumping as I stepped up to him with the rest," he said. "I did not know whether he would recognize me. The Bishop had raised his hand to bless me, when he suddenly looked at me. He gave a start, and his hand remained suspended in the air. I bowed my head, the Bishop blessed me quickly, and slightly pressed my hand. No one noticed the little incident. I stepped aside, and waited until the church emptied, and the Bishop disappeared behind the altar. An old monk came up to me, and whispered a rapid word or two: I was to come to the Bishop's house after evening mass.

"At the hotel a steaming samovar and a great variety of Siberian dishes awaited me. The host and his wife sat down with us, as is the custom there, and asked us why we had come to Tobol'sk and how long we were going to stay. We satisfied their curiosity by telling them that we were staying until the next market day. In the course of the conversation that followed we learned many details about the life of the Tsar and his Family.

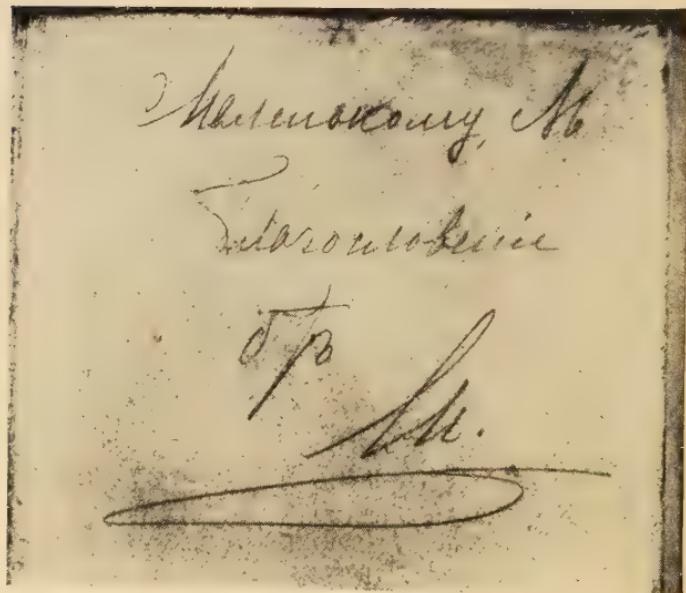


THE AUTHOR AS A CADET OF THE
ELIZAVETGRAD CAVALRY SCHOOL

January 1916



THE MEDALLION, A GIFT TO THE AUTHOR
FROM THE TSARITSA IN TOBOL'SK



DEDICATION ON THE PRAYER-BOOK GIVEN TO THE AUTHOR
IN TOBOL'SK BY THE TSARITSA
“To little M. with the blessing of his Chief”

" It appeared that great crowds were in the habit of surrounding the Governor's House and greeting the members of the family when they appeared at the window. The Tatars settled in the town, and their mullah had actually held public worship before the house on one of their festivals, at which they prayed for the welfare of the Imperial Family. All these stories keenly interested me. I gathered that the presence of the Imperial Family formed the staple topic of conversation, and that the inhabitants were quite proud of the fact that the Emperor was living in their midst.

" While my brother-in-law Dimitrii was visiting someone in the town, I proceeded to the Governor's House. I first walked round the building to familiarize myself with the lie of the land; then I stopped before the main entrance, and slowly and deliberately lit a pipe. I looked carefully up at the windows where a light dress occasionally whisked past.

" On my return to the hotel I found Dimitrii already there. He told me what he had heard from the merchants in the market place. Almost the entire population was friendly disposed to Their Majesties. The number of revolutionaries, workmen, and soldiers back from the Front was too small to count at all. Dimitrii also told me that he had called on a nun whom he knew, who often went to the Governor's House to take them supplies of food. We could make use of her to get letters and parcels to Their Majesties.

"The pealing of the church bells announced the beginning of the evening mass. I went to the Cathedral, stayed to the end of the mass, and then, after waiting until everybody had left the church, I proceeded to the Bishop's house. A monk opened the heavy oak door to me, with the remark that the Bishop was expecting me.

"I was ushered into a large study where Bishop Hermogen was sitting at a desk absorbed in his work. On seeing me he came quickly towards me, blessed me, and said:

"'How did you get here? I should never have expected to see you here.' He rang for tea, invited me to sit down beside him, and asked after my father and the other members of the family. I had not seen him for ages, and it took a long time to relate all that had happened in the last few years. When I spoke of my marriage the Bishop jumped from his seat as if a tarantula had bitten him. He paced up and down the room, muttered something, sighed heavily, and crossed himself frequently. Then he came up to me, kissed me warmly, and told me I had acted rightly: 'I know that you shouldered a heavy cross by marrying Rasputin's daughter in these difficult times. I believe that you will be a firm and faithful support to her. God will not forget your love for the persecuted and oppressed. You know the story of my relations with the late Grigorii? I loved him once and believed in him, or, rather, in his mission to bring a new element into the life of Russia and

to strengthen the tie—already weakened, even then—between the Tsar and his people, to the benefit of both. His arbitrary deviation from our programme, the course he pursued, which was opposed to mine, his attacks on the aristocracy and such people as the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, whom I regarded as the firmest pillar of the Throne, all combined to cause me to break with him. In the heat of the fight many things unfortunately escaped my attention. I did not observe that my conduct merely strengthened the objectionable elements in the Opposition in the Duma. I did not see that the monk-priest Iliodor, who struggled to win me as Satan struggled to win Christ, and who roused in me hatred, stubbornness and ill-will, was a loathsome and contemptible creature. The results you know: a terrible scandal occurred; I was vanquished and exiled to the Zhirovetskiĭ Monastery.'

"The Bishop would have told me much more about Grigoriĭ Efimovich;¹ but I was in a hurry, and asked for his blessing. He gave it to me, and we agreed that, so long as I remained in Tobol'sk, I should visit him every day after evening mass. Then I hurried to a house which I had reconnoitred by daylight, where Mademoiselle X., a lady of the Court, was living. At the time Their Majesties had had to leave Tsarskoe Selo, Mademoiselle X. was ill; when she followed them to Tobol'sk the guards refused her entry to the Governor's House, so she

¹ Rasputin.

was waiting in Tobol'sk until the committee changed its mind. She was loyally devoted to Their Majesties, and enjoyed their confidence and regard. She had never met me before, and was surprised and alarmed when I appeared. I explained that I had come on behalf of Madame Vyrubova, from whom I brought a letter to her, whereupon her alarm changed to pleasure. She thanked me, and at once declared her willingness to deliver to Their Majesties the parcels I had brought with me, without exciting remark. She hoped to be able to accomplish this by means of the valet Volkov, who had free access to the house, and with whom she was in touch. I left money and letters with her, which she promised to give to Volkov next day. We made arrangements for a meeting the following evening, and I went home full of bright hopes.

"The following night I called on Bishop Hermogen again. I gave him a full account of the object of my journey and of Madame Vyrubova and her anxious efforts to collect money. I did not conceal the fact that not nearly all those to whom Madame Vyrubova had applied responded to her request for help for the unfortunate Imperial Family. Those who did reply to her appeal were mainly people from whom one would have least expected it, for example, the wife of Sukhomlinov, a former Minister for War, had been particularly useful. Dear, good Ekaterina Viktorovna, who had only recently been released from prison, had never enjoyed the favours of the

Emperor and Empress, and had been received at Court for the first time only just before the war. But she and her husband forgot all they had had to suffer during the last year or two, the horrible accusations, the sentence of the court, and imprisonment. Like true Christians they forgave and sacrificed all they had for Their Majesties.

"The Bishop listened attentively to my story without interrupting me, merely shaking his grey head occasionally. On its conclusion, he said that I had accomplished a noble act: 'God will reward you for it. . . . But men, what can you expect from them? Be responsible to your own conscience. If it be pure, no reproaches can touch you. Do not forget that goodness and love in humanity must be independent of political views.'

"The Bishop then gave me his impressions of his last interview with the Patriarch Tikhon: 'I talked much with His Holiness about Russia and the Imperial Family. He is convinced, and he also convinced me, that Bolshevik rule in Russia was inevitable, and that it will last a long time, several years, it may be. If it were to come to civil war, the regime would last even longer. The efforts of the Patriarch are directed towards securing the separation of the Church from politics, and in this way saving it from destruction. His Holiness was greatly troubled over the fate of the Imperial Family; he had given them his moral support at least, and could do no more. He assured me that there was no

efficient organization of monarchists in Moscow: everybody had scattered in order to save his or her own life. When we parted His Holiness gave me a consecrated wafer to give to the Emperor with his blessing.

“ ‘ I left Moscow with a heavy heart, and after a difficult journey arrived in Tobol’sk to devote my entire energies to the fight against Bolshevism. But I must confess that Bolshevism is stronger than my sermons! I am aghast to observe how the pestilence is gaining the upper hand here. In my opinion the lot of the Imperial Family is most tragic. With the approach of Bolshevism Their Majesties may expect the fate of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. History repeats itself. Have you not heard in Russia that it is intended to destroy them. But not only in Russia, even here in Tobol’sk, it is much talked of. No, no, this is no time for sending them winter under-clothing or eau-de-Cologne. They must be rescued, rescued, I say! ’

“ The Bishop rose and paced nervously up and down the room: ‘ I am only a priest,’ he said, ‘ whose vocation is to guard the flock entrusted to his care. My position makes me conspicuous to the eyes of the whole world. I cannot be a conspirator or the organizer of a secret society. I am in secret communication with the Imperial Family, and help them not only morally but materially. But what use is all that? It’s a mere drop in the ocean. When Their Majesties came to Tobol’sk I thought that a

group of loyal and devoted men would follow them. In September of last year much might have been done with the help of a few resolute people. But now, now, everything is quite different.'

"With these words the Bishop ceased speaking. A gloomy silence reigned in the room until I took my departure.

"Next day I visited Mademoiselle X. again. She was expecting me. The greater part of the things I had brought with me had already been delivered to the Imperial Family; only a book or two and a bottle of eau-de-Cologne remained, which were causing Mademoiselle X. great anxiety. She could not see any possibility of conveying them to Their Majesties. Her lively chatter and her worry about the eau-de-Cologne reminded me of Bishop Hermogen's words. It seemed to me that we had all been quite blind to the signs of approaching danger.

"I said good-bye and walked slowly to 'Liberty House,' as the Governor's House had been christened. I caught sight of the Grand Duchess Anastasiia at the window; she recognized me, and waved her hand to me. A little later she was joined by the Grand Duchesses Mariia and Tat'iana. They were all in good spirits, and jokingly invited me by gestures to come into the house. It was impossible for me to remain there longer, so I went off. The sight of those merry, unsuspecting girls made me very unhappy. I returned to my hotel, a prey to profound melancholy.

"When I visited Bishop Hermogen next time he asked me to tell him all I knew of the activities of the Petersburg monarchists. I said I did not know very much, as I was not myself a member of any organization; but I gave him a brief summary of what Madame Vyrubova had told me of Markov II's organization. I could not but agree with the Bishop when he described Markov II's efforts as entirely inadequate. None of it, in his opinion, could be regarded in any way as a serious attempt to save the Tsar and his Family, for the measures taken by Markov were simply futile in view of the difficulties of the task. I observed that Markov II perhaps lacked funds to carry out his full plans.

"The Bishop looked at me gloomily: 'Poor, poor Russian Tsar! Job the long-suffering! No money can be found to save the Tsar of Russia! . . . God has punished us severely by taking him from us. Even greater punishments await us. You will have reason to remember my words. . . . But we must not lose heart.' "

All this and many other things Boris Nikolaevich Solov'ev related to me as we sat in our cell in the Tiumen' gaol awaiting our fate, a fate of whose menacing nature we could be in no doubt.

CHAPTER 16

THE EMPEROR'S CONSTABLES

ON another occasion on which Solov'ev was summoned from the cell to see his wife, he returned in quite a different mood; he was no longer bright and cheerful but pale as death and terribly upset. As soon as the door was shut, he cried:

"It's all over. They are taking them away."

I was speechless when he told me that his wife had received news from Tobol'sk that the Imperial Family had been moved from there. We had no idea where they were going to, at whose orders the move had been undertaken, nor what was the object of it; all we had was the bare fact. The situation seemed graver than ever, for it was hardly to be supposed that this new measure would mean any alleviation of the prisoners' lot, or their release. The Entente had no influence with the Moscow comrades, and the Germans did not bother their heads much about the Tsar and his Family. Neither the Emperor nor the Empress had appealed to any of their German relatives since the beginning of their troubles.

Shortly before our arrest, Solov'ev had received

a letter from Tobol'sk which discussed the general position, and also spoke of the depression which had overcome the Tsar when he heard of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. "It pains me to read of this ignominy," he had said, and he also asserted that he could see no salvation for Russia except in a close alliance with the Entente. The Empress's answer to the question whether steps should be taken to remove her and her family abroad, clearly showed the sentiments of the prisoners:

"They may do what they like with us; they may throw us into the Fortress of St. Peter and Paul; but we will not leave Russia. Only a knave would abandon his country in its time of trouble."

No organization capable of rescuing Their Majesties as yet existed. We were powerless to undertake anything, not least because we were in prison. We had to acquiesce in the impossibility of rescuing Their Majesties in Tobol'sk, and set our teeth and go on waiting.

One morning as I was going to the lavatory, quite by chance I ran into Kormashev, the President of the Economic Council, who was inspecting the prison in company with a person who was a stranger to me. He was embarrassed when he saw me, but I went straight up to him and said:

"Comrade, can you tell me why I was arrested? Of what am I really accused? Prisoners on arrest are usually heard within twenty-four hours; but I have been planted here for eleven days without being

taken before the magistrate. Perhaps it was my acquaintance with Rasputin's son-in-law which led to my arrest? That would be ridiculous. Why you yourself were present when I made his acquaintance by chance the other day in the theatre."

He became still more embarrassed, and replied:

"Of course I know that, comrade. I remember it quite well. Comrade Chuvikov told me the other day that your case was to go before the tribunal immediately."

I begged him to remind Chuvikov once more of my humble self, and we parted. In the afternoon the Commissar came to our cell and informed us that the Tsar, the Tsaritsa, and the Grand Duchess Mariia had been brought from Tobol'sk to Tiumen' the day before, and had now been sent on somewhere. We asked him their destination, and he told us that they were being transferred to Moscow, where they would appear before the People's Court.

This confirmed the news Mara Grigor'evna had brought us. We understood why the Heir Apparent had remained in Tobol'sk: he was ill and obviously his sisters had been left to look after him.

On the Saturday of the sixth week in Lent the prisoners were permitted to go to confession, and we were glad to avail ourselves of this privilege. Each prisoner went up to the grille, behind which was the priest, and it was most depressing not to be free even when performing this sacred rite. We let all the others go first; then Solov'ev approached the grille,

and I remained alone. To my surprise Solov'ev's confession lasted a very long time, and it even looked as if something like a dispute was in progress between him and the priest. But at last he was given absolution, and he left the church in a most agitated state. It was my turn next. After the usual questions the priest asked what I had been arrested for. I replied quite frankly:

"I am in prison on account of my monarchist convictions."

The priest gave utterance to a generalization to the effect that a man should remain true to his convictions, but should not forget that these must not be contrary to God's teachings.

On my return to our cell I found Solov'ev in a state of great excitement. He told me that the priest had put the same question to him, and had then pointed out the harm which the Tsaritsa had brought on the Russian Empire. Solov'ev could not endure this, and had stood up for the Empress, so that the thing became a quarrel rather than a confession. To a religious man like Solov'ev such an event was a great blow. I must confess that when I heard his story I was almost afraid the priest would betray us to the Bolsheviks. But this did not happen; the priest respected the secrecy of the confessional.

At the end of April we experienced many an unpleasant moment. It began with a sudden outburst of life in our usually quiet prison. Loud talking and even shouts could be heard everywhere; the whole

place was in an uproar. When we asked our warder, an old man, who always treated us well, what was the cause of all the noise, he said excitedly that the Commissar Zapkus intended to visit the prison. When he came there for the first time he had sent for the list of prisoners, picked out five names, and had them shot out of hand, without giving any reason for it.

The Commissar's name was familiar to me. I recalled the special train I had seen in Tiumen' station. Zapkus was notorious all over Western Siberia: he was continually travelling hither and thither, terrorizing the railway officials. The telegrams he despatched every time he made a journey were famous. They ran as follows:

"The train of the Commissar Zapkus is coming along. I warn you against the slightest delay. Those responsible for the delay will be shot on the spot."

And he always carried out his threat. On one occasion the water pump was not working properly at a station, and the train stopped there for a quarter of an hour instead of the scheduled ten minutes. So Zapkus had the stationmaster, the telegraphist, and the signalman shot, and then proceeded calmly on his way.

The news of his coming hardly gave us cause to rejoice. We knew only too well that we should be the first victims of his barbarous cruelty, if he really visited the prison. We prayed, said good-bye to each

other, and awaited events. But, after an hour or two, the prison calmed down again, as the report of the arrival of the Commissar proved to have been a false one.

On 1st May, the proletarian festival, we had other anxious moments. It was a warm day, and through the open window we heard the strains of the International. The crowd came nearer and nearer, and we expected a mob to come to the prison, and demand that we should be handed over to them. We knew that there would be little resistance to a demand of this kind. But this day too passed without mishap.

In the afternoon I was summoned to the office for the first time in a fortnight. Imagine my disappointment when I found only Ensign Gusev with a bundle: it was my underclothing which I had given to his wife to wash. He told me that the Red Guard had been disarmed in the interval and that my Ulans had passed a resolution at a meeting to ask the Staff the reason for my imprisonment and how long it was going to last. I learned later that I had to thank the faithful Koval'chuk for this.

In spite of my disappointment I was very glad to get the clean clothes. Neither of us had had our shirts off for a fortnight, and, in spite of washing, had been unable to avoid vermin. Every night, after finishing our game of chess, which had become a rite—we made the pieces from bread—we waged a hopeless war against these parasites by holding the

seams of our underclothes over the petroleum lamp. But it was of little avail.

On 2nd May the order for Solov'ev's release suddenly arrived. We were both so astonished that we could hardly believe it. Solov'ev collected his things, said good-bye, and left the cell, beaming with joy.

I remained alone. Why I was still detained was quite incomprehensible, and I looked forward with certainty to being set free too; the only question was when. The prospect of spending Easter in prison, and alone into the bargain, did not appeal to me.

None the less I was very glad for Solov'ev and his wife's sake. Besides, Solov'ev's release showed that the "comrades" had not the slightest suspicion of our true colours and of our real relations. Bronard's dirty trick was only a dirty trick, and had not had any ill effects. Good Friday arrived. I fully expected that I should have to pass this great festival behind prison walls, and merely looked forward to the Easter eggs Solov'ev had promised me, which would console me a little in my loneliness. I had begun to tidy my cell when the door opened and the head warder came in:

"You are to come to the office," he said. "The Prison Commissar wishes to see you."

I was going to come straight away but he added: "No, bring all your things with you, you will probably be released."

I needed no second bidding, collected my posses-

sions, said good-bye to the warders, and proceeded to the office. And the Commissar actually informed me that I was to be set free at the order of the Tribunal. My braces and two roubles were returned to me; the rest of the money had gone for tobacco. Then I left the prison with all speed. The little green-painted gate was locked behind me with a grating noise. I was free again!

At my hotel I was welcomed with cries of joy by Loshkomoev, the proprietor, a jolly, fat gentleman, and by the staff. Apparently they all regarded me as a desirable visitor and not a bloody Bolshevik.

I had hardly reached my room when Sedov appeared and congratulated me on my release. Soon afterwards Simonenko also turned up; he had heard on the Staff that I had been set free. When he saw that I was safe and sound he seemed so happy that I was honestly touched by his emotion and his kindness. He gave me news of all that had happened while I was in prison.

Naturally I was most interested in his account of the removal of the Emperor and Empress; it appeared that he had actually escorted the prisoners! On 27th March he received orders to get ready immediately all the horses for which saddles were available, to pick out the best and most reliable volunteers, and appear at the barracks with his company equipped for active service. Simonenko had no idea what it was all about and duly carried out the order. As he stood ready with his fifteen Ulans,

Permiakov and Nemtsov drove up in a motor car. Permiakov made a speech to the volunteers, and told them that the task of acting as escort to the ex-Tsar had been entrusted to them. He adjured them to preserve on this occasion the dignity becoming to true "soldiers of the Revolution": "See that the ex-Tsar is convinced of the discipline and strength of the Red Army, the freest army in the world."

After his speech Permiakov resumed his seat in the car and told Simonenko and his company to ride alongside of it. When they arrived at a village the soldiers had to halt while Permiakov went on alone. Soon afterwards a procession of vehicles appeared; at the head were five horsemen, followed by a vehicle containing a machine gun and another full of soldiers. Then came the car in which sat the Tsar accompanied by Commissar Iakovlev. Next followed a car with the Empress and the Grand Duchess Mariia, and then one with Their Majesties' suite, which consisted of four gentlemen and one lady. The tail was made up by Permiakov, Nemtsov, four vehicles containing soldiers and machine guns, and, last of all, another five horsemen. Simonenko counted fifty men in all in the escort.

Towards evening the procession passed through the town and arrived at the station, where a special train was in readiness. The Imperial Couple and the Grand Duchess took their places in a first-class carriage, the suite in two third-class carriages. Commissar Iakovlev took leave of Permiakov and

Nemtsov, thanked Simonenko for the model behaviour of his subordinates, and then seated himself in the compartment of the Emperor and Empress.

The train then began to move in the Ekaterinburg direction. Simonenko told me that the Tsar looked very calm, but that the Tsaritsa was very pale and apparently fatigued by the journey. "Do you know what I think, Sergei Vladimirovich?" concluded Simonenko. "If only anyone had liked it would have been easy to snatch the Tsar from our hands. A little boldness and it would have succeeded."

I listened like a man in a dream. If I had not been shut up in prison I should have taken Simonenko's place that evening. I should have had to escort Their Majesties, utterly helpless and powerless to aid them. I blessed the hour I was arrested; it had saved me from having to play constable to my Emperor!

Simonenko's final words were the finishing stroke; I could hardly master my despair and grief. The possibility of rescuing the Imperial Family had actually existed, and now it was gone. What had Their Majesties thought of during the journey? Had they not expected every moment a bold stroke from some of their adherents, only to be disappointed in the end and to resign themselves to their fate?

I began to hope that, with the removal to Moscow, their position might be more favourable, as there was in Moscow an organization which seemed powerful and influential enough to move the German

diplomats who were staying there. I could not imagine the German Emperor's remaining entirely unsympathetic to the fate of the Russian Imperial Family. Perhaps the Emperor William would accomplish what our Allies had failed to do. These thoughts soothed my mind a little.

After Simonenko had taken his departure I went to church to the early Easter mass. The sublime service brought me to a state of perfect peace, and I slept very well all the night after. I had no suspicion that next morning was to bring even more terrible news.

As I was going to call on Solov'ev next day I suddenly heard a well-known voice behind me: "Comrade, where are you off to?" I turned and saw Permiakov getting out of his car.

"I wish you a happy Easter," he said, shaking me by the hand. "I am very glad to see you at liberty again. Why did you not come to see me yesterday? We were all waiting to celebrate the end of Lent with you."

"I don't understand what you mean, Grigoriĭ Prokop'evich. Why should I call on you now? I am no longer in the service."

"What's that you're saying, comrade? We were sure you would take up your post again. You were arrested by mistake."

I could not help laughing at this, and said: "Why are you so sure? The mistake was very unpleasant for me, and might in certain circumstances have been

fatal. You might have shot me perhaps and then begged my corpse's pardon for the mistake."

Permiakov was disconcerted, but nevertheless persisted that I must come back to my post. He promised me my pay for the time I had been in prison, and begged me in any case to come to Staff Headquarters. I replied nonchalantly that I would come if I could.

With that we parted. This meeting and, still more, Permiakov's request, were utterly unexpected. At least I now knew for certain that I was regarded as innocent, a fact very welcome to me and to us all.

When I arrived at Solov'ev's I did not find the happy Easter atmosphere I expected. Boris Nikolaevich was gloomy and woebegone; his wife was sad and had obviously been weeping. The reason for this I found to be the news that the Emperor and Empress were being detained in Ekaterinburg. This move boded no good. Even before my arrest the proclamations of the Ekaterinburg Military Commissariat had given me the impression that the real power there was in the hands of the Red Guard. All the appeals of the Ekaterinburg Soviet had an ultra-radical sound, and the town of Ekaterinburg proudly styled itself the "Citadel of the Revolution."

We discussed the new situation and came to certain decisions. As I had the opportunity to take up my service again, I should do so. There was still a chance of officers arriving from Petersburg. Although Their Majesties were in Ekaterinburg

there were many advantages in my working as a red officer in Tiumen'. I could enrol any officers who might arrive in my squadron, and work to have them moved to the Ekaterinburg area. Whereas if the Emperor and Empress were removed to Moscow it would be possible for me to provide the officers with false orders to return to Russia.

The incomprehensive silence of Petersburg worried us very much. Two months had already elapsed since I left there, and neither the group of officers promised by Markov II, nor Andreevskii and Grünwald, the costs of whose journey were to be defrayed by Madame Vyrubova, had appeared. We could only suppose that the organization had been destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

CHAPTER 17

REVENGE

AFTER the Easter holidays I went to Staff Headquarters, and after Chuvikov had employed all his persuasive arts on me, I consented to resume my post. Permiakov immediately gave orders that I was to receive my full retrospective pay. I then learned the details of the detention of the Tsar and Tsaritsa at Ekaterinburg.

On 27th April news arrived that armed workers had collected at Poklevskaia station on the line between Tiumen' and Ekaterinburg, with the intention of forcibly removing the Tsar from the train as it passed through. When Commissar Iakovlev left Tiumen' with Their Majesties on the night of 28th April, he received word of the proposed attack before reaching Poklevskaia and immediately ordered the train to turn back. After a brief halt at Tiumen' the train again proceeded eastward towards Omsk, but was stopped by Red Guards at Kulomzino station. Iakovlev left the train, proceeded to Omsk alone, and got into telephonic communication with Moscow. He received orders to bring the Emperor and Empress straight to Russia, whereupon he returned to Kulomzino, and ordered the train to turn

and go west again. On his arrival at Tiumen' for the third time he received a report that the line to Ekaterinburg was free again: the workers who had collected at Poklevskaia station had returned to Ekaterinburg. On 30th April the train arrived at Ekaterinburg, and was immediately surrounded by a large detachment of Red Guards. It appeared from the report of the Ekaterinburg military commissariat that the Ekaterinburg Soviet had ordered the train to be stopped, regardless of the orders Iakovlev had received from Moscow. Their Majesties were taken to a house previously decided upon, which belonged to a merchant called Ipat'ev, and in which they were now living in close confinement.

In the course of a walk through the town I had once noticed, in one of the streets parallel to the main street, an abandoned courtyard in which were empty stables. I visited the courtyard, inspected the stables, and saw that they could be easily extended and used for my squadron. The men could conveniently be accommodated in the adjoining school buildings. This new plan delighted me because I could keep on building and destroying *ad infinitum*. So I at once applied to Permiakov, who gave me *carte blanche* in the matter. Two days later found my Ulans already quartered in the school, and the Economic Department repairing the stables on Permiakov's urgent order.

We received news from Tobol'sk to the effect that the Heir Apparent was recovering only very slowly,

but was already out of bed. To judge by all the reports the Bolsheviks also intended to remove him and the Grand Duchesses from Tobol'sk. The Emperor and Empress were still at Ekaterinburg, in the same house, but it was now surrounded with a wooden fence which completely concealed the windows. The rule of the new commissar, Goloshchekin, in whose power the Royal Couple now were, admitted of no possibility of getting into communication with the prisoners.

After fresh conferences we decided that Sedov should give up his job and proceed immediately to Petersburg. I enjoined him to impress on the organization that, if the Emperor and Empress were to be kept permanently at Ekaterinburg, there was very little hope of rescuing them. Ekaterinburg was not Tobol'sk. He was to beg Markov II to make full use of his connections with the Soviet authorities to try to find out the reason for the detention at Ekaterinburg, and to get into immediate communication with the Germans on the subject of saving the Emperor and his Family. I knew from Madame Den that Markov II had contrived to get his people appointed to responsible Soviet posts; and I had discovered for myself, from the conversations in our secret meeting place, that he was also in touch with the Germans.

On 20th May I heard at the Staff that the Tsesarevich, the Grand Duchesses, and the rest of the suite had come to Tiumen' by boat, and were to be taken

from there to Ekaterinburg by rail. I had no proof of the truth of the story; but, nevertheless, I reported sick on the day Their Highnesses arrived at Tiumen', to avoid the possibility of being ordered to command the troops escorting them from the pier to the station.

Towards the end of May we got a report that an anti-Bolshevik rebellion had broken out at Cheliabinsk, which was strongly supported by the former Czechoslovak prisoners of war. During the Kerenskiĭ regime the latter had been permitted to form a detachment of their own, and to fight on our western front against their former fellow-countrymen, the Austrians. Cheliabinsk was now the centre from which the Czechoslovaks were being dispatched back to their own country. This rebellion was the beginning of a general movement against the Bolsheviks all over Siberia; the Ural Cossacks, led by their Hetman, Dutov, and the Siberian Cossacks of Cossack Captain Anenkov had joined the movement.

The "comrades" in Tiumen' were uneasy. But no measures were taken and they felt sure that the movement would be "liquidated" in a very short time; nevertheless, the atmosphere in our "upper spheres" was very jumpy.

Sedov had been gone for a fortnight and we had had no news of him. Solov'ev tried several times to establish a means of communication with Their Majesties, but had no success. The new guards consisted of ex-criminals, Letts and Hungarians. One

could hardly imagine what conditions the Imperial Family must be living in; the whole suite, with the exception of Dr. Botkin, had been thrown into prison.

Solov'ev's own position was meanwhile becoming more and more critical; his case had not yet been shelved; in fact, he learned from the tribunal that it was going to be dealt with at the beginning of June. I advised him not to wait for this date, since the proceedings might revive the old story of Bronard, and the consequences could not be foreseen. On my advice he sent his wife to Pokrovskoe, where he himself would also soon take refuge.

I myself began slowly to make preparations for leaving the service, as I had now to acknowledge the aimlessness of my present activities. I was firmly convinced that the only thing that might even yet save the Tsar and his Family was energetic action on the part of the German Government. I no longer dreamed that any colleagues would come from Petersburg: my faith in the Markov II organization and in Markov himself had vanished. No more hope could be placed in Russia, which made the official attitude of Siberia to the Imperial Family all the more revolting to me.

From the Bolshevik press, whose organ, the *Izvestiia*, poured buckets of filth on the unhappy prisoners, nothing else was to be expected; but the Menshevik journal, *The Tiumen' Worker*, which was carrying on a theoretical and social party war with

the Bolsheviks, used the same words to condemn their Sovereign and his Family. Every day reports from the capitals appeared in the papers telling of the activities of the monarchists. After the Ukraine was freed from the Bolsheviks and the hetmanship was proclaimed, the monarchists in Kiev, Khar'kov, and Odessa held intercessory services for the Imperial Family, and at their meetings demanded the immediate overthrow of the Bolsheviks and the restoration of the Tsar to his sacred rights.

In Tiumen' these announcements made no impression worth mentioning; but they made a correspondingly greater one in Ekaterinburg. Appeals of this kind appeared in the Ekaterinburg *Izvestiia*: "Workers, do not forget whom you are guarding! The fate of Nikolai the Bloody and his Family rests in your hands." Various resolutions were passed to the effect that the "red" Urals were prepared to resist all attempts to free the Tsar with their last drop of blood. Others demanded that the ex-Tsar should be immediately handed over to the People's Court to answer for the crimes he had committed.

I read with great distress of this medley of intercessory services held under the protection of German bayonets, and the hysterical shrieks of the criminals who held Their Majesties' lives in their hands. Could the monarchists not understand, then, that by the uproar they were causing, they were merely making the Tsar's already terrible position even more terrible? Did they never think that news of

these services and demonstrations would reach Ekaterinburg, and be deliberately exploited against the very people for whose welfare the monarchists were praying?

A few days after this an opportunity unexpectedly presented itself of taking my revenge on these people who by their treacherous conduct had been guilty of bringing about the Revolution and the present state of affairs. In the course of festivities in honour of the anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, friction arose between the Social Democrats and the Bolsheviks; and the *Tiumen' Worker*, the journal of the Mensheviks, published a furious diatribe against the Soviet regime in Tiumen'. The article ended with the words: "We are not like the Bolsheviks. We do not use dark and secret weapons; we fight with visors down. We are ready to sign our appeal with our full names." The names of thirty-two of the most eminent Mensheviks in the town followed.

At first I paid no attention to this announcement; but, when I came to the Staff, I found Permiakov in a state of furious anger, with the newspaper in his hand. Instead of a greeting, he shoved the paper at me, and said: "Read that! The swine!" Naturally, I agreed with him most cordially. Permiakov paced excitedly up and down the room, giving vent to unflattering expressions about the Mensheviks. Then a splendid idea struck me: "What do you think, Georgii Prokop'evich," said I, "of simply having these scoundrels arrested. Then everything

will settle down immediately, and it will be a lesson to the others too."

Permiakov looked at me in some surprise, but pondered the matter for a little and then said: "It's not a bad idea. I will talk to Nemtsov about it."

In the afternoon I was called to the telephone at the hotel. It was Permiakov, who informed me in a joyful voice that my proposal had been accepted, and asked me to be at the Staff at nine o'clock with all the Ulans at my disposal.

I was beside myself with joy. I was actually to have the privilege of arresting the leaders of the Menshevik party! Those Mensheviks who were for the most part former political exiles, who had accomplished their work of disintegration and systematically prepared not only Tiumen', but the whole Russian Empire, for the triumph of their fellow-revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks.

How I hated these ideological followers of that hysterical mountebank, Kerenskiĭ, who had bathed all Russia in a sea of blood and tears! How I regretted that it was only these wretched subordinates I had the chance to render harmless, and not the chief mandarins themselves, the Kerenskiĭs, Chernovs, Minors, and all the rest of the crew! But all the same, it was better than nothing.

After a long discussion with Koval'chuk about how the horses were to be saddled, I rode out at the head of my fifteen Ulans, and was in front of the Staff building at half-past eight.

From the military standpoint I cut a pitiable figure; the uniform I had ordered was not ready, and so I was wearing Koval'chuk's boots and fur cap, my own civilian trousers, a raincoat, a belt, and a big nickel-plated Smith and Wesson pistol, 1877 model, for which I had not a single bullet. Into the bargain I buckled on a Cossack sword, and allowed a lock of hair to escape from under my cap. When I saw myself in the mirror I got a fright: my mind involuntarily went back to the commander of the Red Guards who came to arrest me at Beletskovka.

I left my Ulans on the street and went in to get detailed instructions. The room in which the Executive Committee were sitting was on the second floor. I knocked at the door and a nervous voice cried out:

“Who is there?”

“The squadron commander,” was my reply.

The door opened and I saw before me the complete “aristocracy”: Permiakov, Nemtsov, Neverov, Comrade Bitsenko, and a repulsive female, who was at the head of the Commissariat of Welfare Institutions. Besides these dignitaries there was a guest, a communist whose name I did not know. He was a typical romantic bandit captain, a finely built fellow with glittering eyes and black curly hair, on which he wore a broad-brimmed hat. His distinguishing mark was a missing index finger on the right hand.

Nemtsov handed me the order of arrest with an air of importance. I read with pleasure: “The

commander of the punitive expedition, Comrade Markov, is instructed to search the houses of the undermentioned persons, to seize documents, and arrest the undermentioned persons." The names of the thirty-two Mensheviks who had signed the appeal followed. The guest accompanied me, "to give assistance if necessary," as Nemtsov put it. But I was quite aware that he had been attached to supervise and control me. Assisted by two Ulans he, with great difficulty and exertion, scrambled on to a horse, and we rode away.

First of all we repaired to the headquarters of the militia, where the chief, Comrade Bannimkov, had prepared the list of addresses. Then we rode on through the ill-lighted streets until we came to the house of Makarov, the delegate of the Tiumen' Workers' Union, and an old member of the Menshevik party. The house was quickly surrounded, and with three volunteers I mounted the steps to the door. When I knocked a voice called out: "Who is there?"

"Open in the name of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic," I answered in a loud clear voice.

"Who . . ." stammered the voice.

"The commander of the punitive expedition."

The door opened. I saw a pale, frightened woman, to whose skirts three children were clinging. A stockily built man in workman's clothes came towards me.

"What can I do for you, comrade?" he addressed me.

"Are you Comrade Makarov?"

"I am." I showed him the order. He said in a faltering voice:

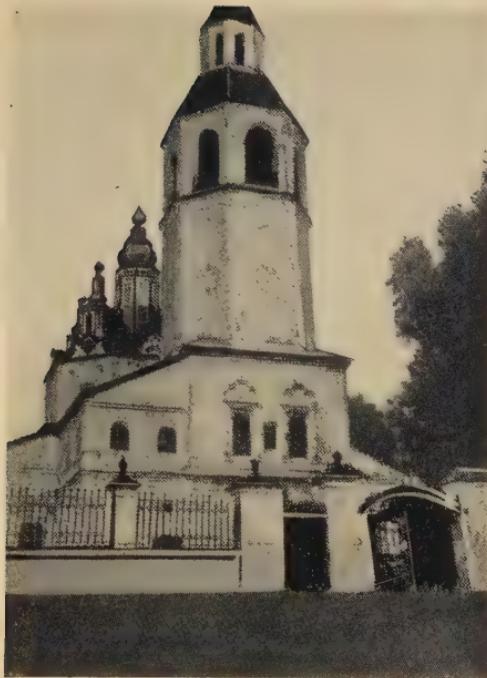
"Please rummage about as much as you like. I have no arms."

"Open the boxes yourself. I will not touch your things."

He obeyed my orders. I found nothing incriminating, and bade him put on his things and bring what was necessary with him. As he put on his coat, he observed:

"What does it all mean, comrade? You call yourselves socialists of the purest water, and then arrest me, an old social democrat, exactly as in the time of the Tsar. What am I arrested for?"

I sent him to Staff headquarters under escort and proceeded with my mission. By 3 a.m. I had the pleasure of seeing twenty-two persons whom I had arrested collected in a private room in the Staff building. The others had succeeded in finding cover owing to a tactical error I was guilty of in this my first experience of making arrests. The party was very variegated. Both workmen and intelligentsia were represented, among the latter being the mayor, his deputy, two journalists on the staff of the *Tiumen' Worker*, the above-named Comrade Makarov, his secretary, Dr. Kapinskiĭ, an old revolutionary, and, according to rumour, a personal



THE BLAGOVESHCHENSKAIA CHURCH IN TOBOL' SK

ОГЛАСЬБР	
Бригада	5
Ряды	1
Масло	7
Сахар	1
Соль	1
Соки	10
Мука	1
Круги	—
Оксы	—

Н Р А В И Л А:

1) Вы��аете пакетами покупные предметы только при продаже на рынке или, как это менеджеры «Самопомощи» делают.

2) Всегда утром купленный хлеб доставляется прямиком из мельницы, поэтому хлеб не успевает гнисти.

3) Нормы массы промышленных изделий неизменны.

4) Передача картотеки другим лицам воспрещена.

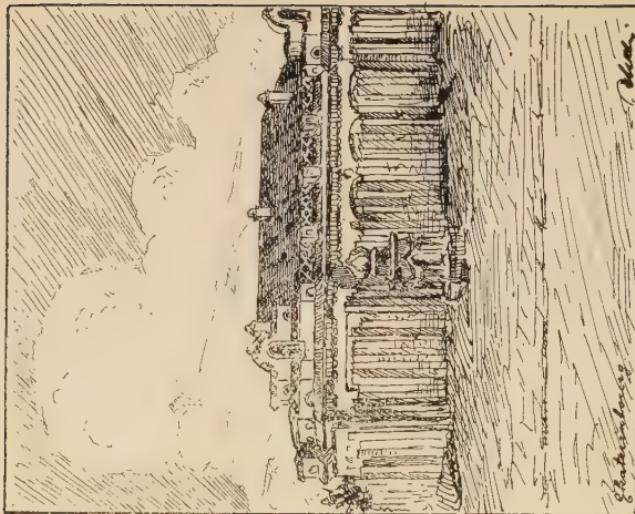
Тоб. Город Продов. Ком.
Продовольственная карточка
№ 54.
Фамилия Борисов
Имя Николай
Отчество Анатольевич
Код Эко-Компьютер
Задача Актолог
№ 100
Серия 1000 Стандарт
Срок действия карты
до конца 1999 года

FOOD CARD ISSUED BY THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES OF
TOBOL'SK TO "NIKOLAI ALEXANDROVICH ROMANOV"

Civil Status : Ex-Emperor ; number of members of family : 7.

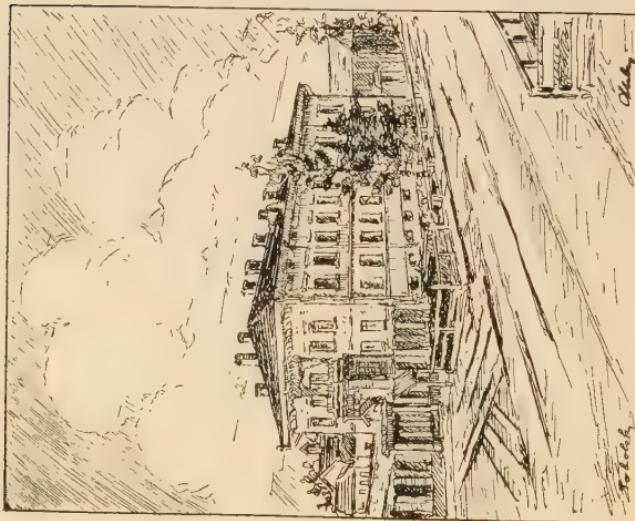
Ration for the month of October: 5 pud 10 f. (100 lbs.)

of meal, 7 lbs. of butter, 10 lbs. of sugar,



THE HOUSE OF THE ENGINEER, IPAT'EV

Where the Imperial Family was held
prisoner by the Bolsheviks



THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE IN TOBOL'SK

Where the Imperial Family stayed from
1917 to 1918

friend of Kerenskiĭ—in a word the *haute volée* of the Tiumen' social democrats. The scene tickled me so much that I felt like a military police colonel of the good old days. I gazed at the satisfied smile on the face of Permiakov, who had come to gloat over the sight of his enemies, and thought to myself: "Your turn will come too, my friend. Everyone's time comes in the end. Eat each other up; that amount of good at least we can get from you."

CHAPTER 18

IN THE "RED URALS"

THE revolt of the Cossacks and the Czechoslovak rising continued to spread: fighting was in progress seventy versts south of the Ekaterinburg-Omsk railway line. Soldiers of the Red Army from Omsk and Ekaterinburg were fighting on the Bolshevik side. The Tiumen' garrison was inactive; Permiakov did try to undertake a reconnaissance in the Kurgan district, but had no success. Our cavalry saddles were of home manufacture and would not stand much wear and tear, and so any serious military enterprises were out of the question.

It had been suggested to me that I should put in a demand for a hundred and fifty saddles. I did so, and asked for Canadian saddles, which are utterly unsuitable for our Siberian horses, and of which I knew there was not a single one in the commissariat stores of the Tiumen' district. Permiakov asked me why exactly I had applied for this particular kind of saddle; but I explained that our horses were not trained as riding horses, and that on this account the stiff American head harness would be the most suitable; besides, it would give the horses a better

appearance, and, further, that I and not he was the cavalry instructor. Permiakov signed my application without another word. To my amazement, it was included with the urgent papers for despatch to Moscow, and bore the address: "The Commissar for War, Comrade Trotskiĭ. Urgent!"

As I expected, no saddles had appeared by the time I left Tiumen', and so my worthy squadron had to remain quietly and peacefully in the town. Had I been informed that there were no Canadian saddles, I would have ordered Japanese or some other kind of saddles, anything but Cossack saddles, which would have been easiest to procure in Siberia.

In the middle of June a company of the Red Army was despatched to Pokrovskoe, because there was unrest in the district, and Solov'ev, taking advantage of the situation, put in a request for a permit to go to Pokrovskoe, and enclosed a telegram announcing that his wife was seriously ill. There was no danger of his escaping, as he declared he was prepared to join the troop which was being sent there, and so his request was granted, and permission given him to remain in Pokrovskoe for as long as the troop was stationed there. He had to give his word to return to Tiumen' immediately if summoned by the Revolutionary tribunal.

With Solov'ev's departure I lost my last hope of being able to do anything to rescue the Imperial Family. At our final meeting we discussed the existing situation and established several points. To

begin with, the Imperial Family was now completely in the hands of the Ekaterinburg local soviet, which had not carried out the order of the Government to transport the prisoners to Moscow. In spite of all Solov'ev's and my attempts to get into communication with the Family, we had had no success whatever. All those on whom we could rely who had been to Ekaterinburg agreed that a forcible abduction of the Tsar and his Family was out of the question. The chances of success were so small that any such attempt would be equivalent to the suicide of both rescuers and rescued. But even if we had wanted to make this desperate attempt our lack of funds was a great obstacle. Money was not available to bring an adequate number of trustworthy men to Ekaterinburg, and, even had the money for this been forthcoming from some source, after a successful abduction we should again have been without funds, a circumstance which would inevitably frustrate the whole enterprise.

Our intention of enlisting members of Markov's organization in my squadron had come to nothing, as not even Grünwald and Andreevskii, whom Anna Vyrubova had provided with money for the journey, had turned up, let alone any other member of the organization. We had no further news of Sedov, and so knew nothing of the position of our organization or the steps it had taken.

It was useless and even harmful to our cause for Solov'ev to remain any longer in Tiumen'. If his

case were brought up before the Revolutionary tribunal, I might be summoned as a witness, in which case it was bound to be difficult for us both to extricate ourselves from many grave contradictory statements.

All these considerations led us to decide that Solov'ev must go to Pokrovskoe, but remain in continual communication with me as long as I remained in Tiumen'. If Pokrovskoe became too hot to hold him, he had a refuge always ready for him in the region of the monastery of Verkhoturie. For my part I would slowly make preparations for a journey to Petersburg in order to inform Markov II and Madame Vyrubova of the course of events. Solov'ev and I were both agreed that the only possibility of saving the Tsar and his Family from the clutches of the Ekaterinburg cut-throats, lay in a diplomatic intervention. A great foreign power, for whom the Bolsheviks felt both fear and respect, must intervene, and this great power could only be Germany.

Solov'ev explained the fact of Markov II's having left me in the lurch on the hypothesis that he had already got into communication with the Germans, and for this reason had abandoned the idea of sending emissaries to Siberia. For a forcible removal of the Tsar from the Red Urals would involve a very great risk.

One morning Simonenko burst into my room with a pallid face, and told me in great agitation that a mutiny had broken out two hours ago in the Red

Army; our squadron had arrested the Executive Committee and all our commissars, Permiakov, Riazanov, and Chuvikov. So great was the excitement that Permiakov had been nearly killed in the course of the arrests. They had all been taken to the theatre, and meetings and conferences were being held to decide what was to be done with the prisoners. All the "leading authorities," with the sole exception of myself had been arrested.

I hurried off at once to my squadron. On the way I met a great crowd of soldiers cursing in every key. Some were shouting: "The rascals tried to make off with the cash! With national property! At the Front the comrades get no pay, while here the commissars are stealing all the money!"

Others were shouting: "Comrades, it's a trick. It is the White Guards who are deliberately trying to confuse us."

I made out that what was the matter was that the men were not receiving their pay. When I came to the barracks of the squadron I found that my volunteers had torn the rifles from the wall. In the rooms there was such a shouting and howling that not a word was intelligible. But when they saw me quiet was restored. Then I had a happy thought. Confusion and disorder reigned in my stores, a fact which might later involve me in great inconvenience. So I decided to distribute all the stores among my volunteers, and to justify the step by declaring that it was the only way of restraining my volunteers from

taking aggressive measures. So I called out in a ringing voice:

"Comrades, the affair can be arranged very easily. Take all you need from stores."

As I had anticipated the commissars were very soon released. When I arrived at the Staff, while still on the steps, I heard Chuvikov shouting madly: "I'll have them shot, hanged, and stood up against the wall without more ado."

I felt extremely uncomfortable, imagining that this applied also to me. But I retained my self-possession and went into his office. He looked at me furiously and shouted: "I'll have you shot! This is rebellion! Do you call that a squadron? It's a gang, that's what it is!"

"Are you referring to me?" I asked. "What would you shoot me for? Perhaps because I have saved you all from certain death?"

Chuvikov stood still in surprise: "What am I to understand by that?"

"Don't shout so much, but listen to what I have to say." And I told him all the supposed measures I had taken to calm down the temper of my squadron and to save him. "We'll see about that," he growled. "The commission will investigate the matter."

"Appoint ten commissions, if you like," I said, and the affair was settled for the time being.

At this time the Staff was considerably increased: two new departments were created, a victualling and a training department. The first of these was

taken over by my old acquaintance, Colonel P., who was afraid that if he did not do it he would be mobilized and sent to the Front. A Colonel N., who had moved to Tiumen' after the rising in Cheliabinsk and was living in our hotel, was appointed head of the second department. When I got to know him better I perceived that this old Staff Colonel had not come to us for nothing; he had contrived to worm his way in among us, and was very soon appointed to this responsible post. He worked in the same way as I did; under his administration it took a week to get a pair of boots out of stores, and his requisitions resembled my orders for saddles.

My suspicions with regard to him were later confirmed in all sorts of ways; but a concealed method could also be discerned in the work of Colonel P. He established an office and composed volumes on the subject of how recruits could be trained for war service in a fortnight. But when I read these instructions I could not help laughing: several pages were devoted to parade duty, but only a line or two to behaviour under fire. Everything was treated in a severely scientific fashion; the immense mass of work done was obvious, but it was of no practical use.

Towards the end of June Omsk fell into the hands of the Siberian Cossacks. The railway line was cut by the Czechoslovaks thirty-five versts from Tiumen'; our "comrades" withdrew to positions which had been already prepared, and remained there. That

same day I saw from the window two Red Army men entering the hotel. Soon after they went away again accompanied by Colonel N., who was as pale as a corpse. I grasped what had happened immediately, and at the Staff I learned that Permiakov had ordered the arrest of the unfortunate Colonel N. on account of a telegram intercepted by the censor, which read as follows:

"Colonel N., Hotel Loshkomoev, Tiumen'. Congratulations. Cossacks occupied Omsk yesterday. Kisses from Musia."

The telegram was from the Colonel's wife, who firmly believed that Tiumen' was already occupied by the Czechoslovaks. The poor woman did not know that by her wire she had pronounced the death sentence on her husband.

A few days after the fall of Omsk a whole fleet of ships arrived at Tiumen': they bore the Omsk commissars with their large staffs and many women, among whom the *demi-monde* predominated. They were accompanied by a small detachment of communist red soldiers, who preferred to reach safety by steamer, to taking to panic flight as their volunteer comrades had had to do under the attack of the Cossacks.

All my superiors at Tiumen' were now forced into the background. All the Nemtsovs, Permiakovs, and Chuvikovs had to make way for new "stars of a higher category," such as Usievich, the president of the "Zapsibsovdep," Akulov, a member of the All-

Russian "Tsik," Loginov, the military commissar of Omsk, and other great personages.

The appearance of Staff headquarters changed completely. In one room a Morse apparatus ticked away; in another were tables with general staff maps of the Tiumen' area; double sentries were posted at all the doors. In a word work was being done. The town government, the forerunner of the notorious *Cheka*, began its work for the defence of revolutionary achievements. Hostages were demanded, among whom was Loshkomoev; our hotel was cleared of foreigners, and became the official headquarters of all the chief authorities.

One evening when Simonenko was visiting me two red soldiers entered my room and took him away. It appeared that, when in an intoxicated condition, he had expressed himself in unflattering terms about the new regime. This incident gave me food for thought: I felt my own position insecure. In spite of the fact that a card hung on my door stating that the room "was occupied by Comrade Markov, member of the Tiumen' Staff of the Red Army, commander of the First Tiumen' Revolutionary Ulan Squadron and Chief Cavalry Instructor and, therefore, inviolable," I felt insecure, and decided to leave Tiumen' as soon as I could.

I took to bed, repeated my performance on my ear, and asked to be discharged from military service on account of sickness. The doctor who examined me found me quite unfit for service on account of

physical debility, aggravated nervous weakness, and also catarrh of the ear, which made an operation necessary. Chuvikov tried to persuade me to stay, but I was not to be moved.

I handed over my squadron to Gusev, and everything went without a hitch. The deficiencies, or rather the emptiness, in my stores was smoothed over. I made out testimonials for myself, which Chuvikov signed, received seven hundred and fifty roubles, took leave of my superior officers, and was ready to start on 30th June. I took a particularly cordial farewell of Colonel P., who wished me a good journey and said:

"I have seen for some time what object you have been slaving for, Sergeĭ Vladimirovich. Nothing else was to be expected from an officer in the Empress's Crimean Cavalry Regiment. But you've been left in the lurch, haven't you?"

I assented to this question. The good colonel could only shrug his shoulders sympathetically. For my part, I said I hoped that he would as quickly as possible get into a position in which it was fitting for him to serve.

"It is God's will," he replied. "If the comrades do not kill me in the meantime, I shan't stay here much longer."

I also called on T. and left with him a note in cipher for Solov'ev, in which I informed him of my departure. Koval'chuk was waiting for me at the hotel. He pressed my hand as if he would never let

it go, and, after some shy hesitation, gave me a copper cross he had found at the brickworks, saying: "Take it, it will protect you."

Four o'clock in the afternoon saw me at the station. I could hardly believe the evidence of my senses when I had really left Tiumen'. At last I was free; my double-dealing was over. I breathed again and prepared once more to work for the welfare of my beloved sovereigns.

I had a travelling companion in my compartment, a man of medium height, with dark, expressive eyes, who kept nervously pulling at his beard all the time. I settled myself, gazed out of the window, and thought I was dreaming, it seemed so incredible that I was really departing from that accursed town. My *vis-à-vis* looked curiously at my semi-military garb; when I told him that I was an ex-officer and had served in the Red Army, he informed me that he had also been an officer, in the second machine-gun regiment in Oranienburg. He said he thought I must have heard of him, Tarasov-Rodionov was his name. He added proudly: "There were articles about me in all the papers. I was the man who discovered Purishkevich's conspiracy."

I was astonished, but assumed a friendly expression and said: "Of course, I have heard of that. I am very glad to make your acquaintance."

To tell the truth I had heard nothing of it, or only very little; but I was very grateful to him for revealing his identity so quickly. At the same time, I was

once more painfully conscious that I must again play a double part and observe extreme caution.

In time he revealed himself as a cultivated and interesting companion. He told me he was going to Ekaterinburg on business. His views on the present situation amazed me by their clarity and severely critical attitude. In contrast to his fellow Bolsheviks, who tried till they were hoarse to prove that a return to the old regime was impossible, Rodionov was convinced and expressed his conviction quite openly that Bolshevism would collapse and lead to a return to monarchism.

He observed my amazement, and went on: "You are surprised at that? But there is nothing surprising in it. We are the victors, but in too simple a way: Tsarism had to go because it had got involved in an unpopular war, and because it had already been disintegrated by the social democrats and social revolutionaries. The social revolutionaries, however, in the eight months of their rule, were guilty of so many stupidities that it was almost no trouble to overthrow them. But that is not all: the stripe does not make the corporal; he must also know his job. We scientifically educated communists are far too few, we can accomplish nothing alone, and the intelligentsia is holding aloof from us. Our adherents and subordinates are mostly either dull-witted idiots or rogues, and it will be they who will cause our downfall. Our doctrine will have its ups and downs. There will be an outbreak of Bolshevism not

only in Russia but all over the world, and, not until the world has got over this disease and convinced itself of the soundness of Bolshevik theories will the true reign of Bolshevism dawn."

I asked him when this moment would arrive. He shrugged his shoulders, and said, "In a hundred years or so!"

We arrived in Ekaterinburg on the morning of 1st July. The station was full of traffic, all the rails were occupied by trains, among which I noticed extemporized armoured trains, which had been hastily put together from iron coal trucks. Crowds of tattered soldiers were strolling about the platforms and on the lines; only the Letts, who were on guard, had a soldierly appearance. Posters and appeals of the following kind were everywhere: "All to the Front! To the defence of the Red Urals! In defiance of all the *bourgeois*, we are lighting the universal conflagration! Be ready, workers!"

I made my way from the station to the town. It goes without saying that I went straight to the house where Their Majesties were staying, and my heart ached when I saw the building: it was surrounded by a high wooden fence which hid the windows; double sentries were posted on all sides. I went closer and confirmed for myself the correctness of the information I had received in Tiumen'. The guards were persons in whose past prison had played an important part; a machine gun stood on the terrace with another sentry beside it.

I stayed in Ekaterinburg till that evening. I went round the house three times, and had to face the fact that nothing could be accomplished by force; any such attempt would endanger the lives of its occupants. The house was a trap affording no way of escape.

Finally, I strolled back to the station and reported to the authorities. When I produced my papers I was received with great respect, and given a place in a carriage containing delegates from the local soviet on their way to the Fifth Soviet Congress at Moscow, which was extremely convenient as this train was faster than the rest. It was not until I found myself in the carriage that I began to come to myself: everything I had seen was so terrible that I had only one thought, to get to Petersburg as soon as possible and make the Markov II organization understand that there was no possible solution but an immediate appeal for help to the Germans. If the Germans did not succeed in saving the Tsar and his Family, then they were indeed doomed. There could be no two opinions on the subject!

CHAPTER 19

CATASTROPHE AND FLIGHT

AFTER a week's journey I at last arrived in Petersburg on 7th July. I hastened to the well-known secret headquarters on the Vasil'evskii Island and rang the bell. The old housekeeper answered it; but when she saw me, she looked terrified, and cried out that I must get away at once: the house was under police surveillance, and had been searched several times already. Markov II and Sokolov had had great difficulty in escaping arrest, and had fled; Sedov had been arrested during a raid, and spent about a month in prison.

This news came as a thunderbolt. Here too, then, things were going badly. Misfortune dogged our steps with diabolical persistence. There was nothing for it but to clear out with all speed. As a precaution I doubled across the island in various directions, in order to shake off possible pursuers, and took several hours to get home. Next morning Sedov, who had heard of my arrival, came to see me. He told me that he had been arrested in our secret headquarters very soon after his arrival in Petersburg; Markov II and Sokolov had been warned in time



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT : PRINCESS WALDEMAR OF PRUSSIA, BARONESS RICHTHOFFEN WEDEL,

PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA, PRINCESS IRENE OF PRUSSIA,

PRINCE WALDEMAR OF PRUSSIA, AND THE AUTHOR

Hemmelsmark 1922



THE AUTHOR

In the uniform of a sleeping-coach attendant
1925

and were supposed to be in Finland. Sedov had spent a fortnight searching for Markov II, but without success.

Before his arrest Sedov had described the general situation in Siberia to Markov II; but had not observed any positive results. Everything was the same as before: Markov II had alleged that he still lacked funds to send men to Siberia, but had consoled Sedov with promises that, as soon as money was available, everything would go in accordance with our settled plans. Sedov also told me that Markov had taken steps in the winter to get the Imperial Family away by water; but the removal of the prisoners to Ekaterinburg had interfered with and wrecked his plans.

Sedov had to thank his Tiumen' papers for the fact that he was not shot after his arrest and for his ultimate release. He succeeded in convincing the comrades that he had merely gone to the house to do some work for the housekeeper, and so he was set free again some time later, just before my arrival. Now his one desire, he said, was to return to Ekaterinburg and remain near Their Majesties.

He was meditating on a plan of joining the insurgent Cossack regiments, and rescuing the Emperor and Empress with their help. I told him that this offered very little prospect of success; but he was strongly of opinion that the civil war in Siberia was favourable to our designs. At the very least the Bolsheviks, when they saw that Ekaterinburg was

threatened, would move the prisoners from the town, and the chances of rescuing them in the course of the journey would again be more favourable. I could not stifle my inner doubts; but I did not want to discourage Sedov, so I wished him all success. He said good-bye to me, and this was the last time I ever saw my friend and fellow-officer. I often sadly recall this excellent, chivalrous man, who was so fervently and unselfishly devoted to the Emperor and Empress.

Madame Vyrubova, whom I called on the day I arrived, was in despair when she heard my description of events. What more could this invalid martyr do? She could only move about with difficulty on crutches, and she had no money and no friends. She told me that she had lost touch with Markov II after my departure for Siberia. The two officers, Grünwald and Andreevskii, had sent no news of themselves, and Madame Vyrubova did not even know whether they were still here or whether they had set out on the journey to Siberia.

I tried to get into communication with Markov II, but no one knew where he had taken refuge. Then I applied to one of our common acquaintances, described the position to him, and unfolded my plan for appealing to the Germans. He was sympathetic and promised to speak to Count Benckendorf, and the ex-Minister of the Court, Count Frederiks, and try to induce them to open negotiations at the German Consulate.

To this day I do not know whether these two

gentlemen took any steps. Made wise by my experiences I now refused to rely on any one, and myself sought for means of getting into touch with the Germans, but this was by no means easy. The Consul General was away, and therefore, pending his return, I tried to get acquainted with some of the Consulate officials.

Petersburg had become dirtier, and the shortage of food was very noticeable. Thanks to my papers I received the food ration of the "second category," the group of citizens who were in the Soviet service. That sounded very well; but I received only half a pound of bread and two herrings a day. The bread was a strange mixture of flour, straw, oats, and other materials. One could get what one liked for money, but prices were exorbitant. In the middle of the day I had a meal at a public Soviet kitchen, for which I paid three and a half roubles; for this sum I received a thin, indefinable sort of soup, a herring, a few potatoes, and a portion of buckwheat groats. In the evenings I fried potatoes in olive oil, and the peelings made "tasty" flat cakes for the next morning.

On 20th July I was walking along the streets when, seeing a crowd on the Nevskiĭ Prospekt, I came closer. The newsboys were running in all directions shouting: "Special edition! The ex-Tsar shot at Ekaterinburg. Death of Nikolai Romanov."

The despatch read as follows: "On the night of 17th July, in accordance with the decision of the Ekaterinburg Soviet, the ex-Tsar Nikolai Romanov

was shot. His family have been transferred to a place of safety."

Brief, cynical, and clear. Not a word about the reason for the unprecedented murder, not the slightest attempt at justification! I looked around me. Despair and grief were to be read on all the faces in the crowd. Everyone was silent; no one dared to comment on the terrible news, for all knew from bitter experience that there were Soviet spies everywhere. Only now and again voices could be heard doubting the truth of the frightful news.

The street was in a state of nervous tension. A little chapel was filled with worshippers and lit by innumerable votive candles; both the simple people and the intelligentsia were represented in the congregation. People were praying softly for the soul of the martyr Tsar; many women sobbed aloud. I cannot remember how I got home. I fell on the bed and wept like a little child.

God alone knows how I got through the next few days. But even in the midst of my despair I felt that I must not abandon myself to passive grief. The Tsaritsa, as I then believed, still lived; and to save her now became my aim. I made even greater efforts to establish communication with the German Consulate, and at last succeeded in making the acquaintance of one of the officials, Hermann Schill by name. I told him quite plainly who I was, and spoke of my relations with the Imperial Family, my journey to Tobol'sk, my service in the Red Army,

and my impressions of Ekaterinburg. He listened very attentively, seemed to take it all greatly to heart, and declared his willingness to send a letter from me to the Grand Duke of Hesse. Not without shame, I informed him of our all too feeble attempts to rescue the Imperial Family, and of the unsatisfactory activities of the Markov organization.

In reply to his question about the reason for the inactivity of this organization, I could only say that there had been no money. Herr Schill was amazed and could only cry: "Incredible!" I observed that it seemed incredible to me also, but that, nevertheless, it was so. Since we Russians had been able to accomplish nothing to save our Emperor, I had now resolved, as an officer and a loyal and devoted subject, to snatch at the last expedient, and appeal to Her Majesty's brother. He was the only one who could save his sister and her innocent children.

Schill agreed with me in everything, and assured me that neither the Grand Duke nor the Tsaritsa's sister, Princess Irene of Prussia, had any idea of the position of the Imperial Family, and that what had been done for them by individuals and organizations had been limited to sending parcels and a few people to them in Siberia.

Greatly astonished he asked me how it came about that I alone had had the idea of writing to the Tsaritsa's relations. What had the leaders of the organization been thinking of when they saw the position of the Emperor and Empress becoming

steadily more precarious? Why had not Markov II, who had assumed the moral obligation of guarding the Imperial Family, thought of appealing for help to the Empress's relations as early as February or March?

I replied that I, as an ordinary member of the organization, was not conversant with all the details. I added that I had believed that Markov II would succeed in collecting a little band of loyal men, sending them to Siberia, and finding the necessary funds. Madame Den was thoroughly informed about the activities of the organization, and when she told Their Majesties that a dependable man had at last been found in the person of Markov II, I did not hesitate to believe that he was really the appointed leader.

Schill could only shrug his shoulders in silence, and he then left me to compose an exhaustive letter to the Grand Duke. I first gave the Tsaritsa's brother a brief account of myself, and then described my impressions from the time I left Petersburg up to my arrival in Ekaterinburg; I drew his attention to the fruitless activity of the Markov organization, gave him my views on the perilous position of the Tsaritsa and her children after the Tsar's tragic end, and concluded by setting out the reasons why Germany alone was in a position to help the Tsaritsa, and why the utmost help was called for. This letter was sealed by Schill, and despatched to Germany on 23rd July by a diplomatic courier.

I told the acquaintance who had promised to negotiate with Count Benckendorf about my letter. He was greatly astonished at my boldness, and, for my part, I was no less surprised by his attitude: "Are my youth and my low rank to be an obstacle to fulfilling my most sacred duties?" I asked him.

"Of course not. I did not mean that. Everyone has the right to appeal to crowned heads. You signed the letter with your full name?"

"Of course. I not only gave my name, but an outline of my history and my address."

"That is just what I thought. Just imagine if the Bolsheviks stop the courier and confiscate his mails, what then? You will be arrested and shot."

This remark made me forget the age and rank of my interlocutor: I got very excited and cried: "If even now we still put our own interests in the foreground instead of concentrating all our thoughts on saving the Tsaritsa, we have no right to call ourselves human beings an instant longer."

It now became more and more clear to me that it was necessary to leave Soviet Russia. Help for the Tsaritsa could come only from outside Russia, and so I decided to go abroad, and from there continue to work with all my energy for the rescue of the Tsaritsa. For this purpose the best course was to let myself be "ukrainized." As a native of the Crimea I belonged officially to the new Free State of the Ukraine, and I required merely a formal confirmation of my new nationality from the Ukrainian Consulate.

Before I set out I had several further meetings with Herr Schill. No reply had yet been received from the Grand Duke of Hesse; Schill informed me that, according to the reports which he had received from the German Legation at Moscow, the Imperial Family had been transferred to Perm on 17th July. There was nothing further in the papers about the Emperor's death; probably pressure to this effect was being exercised on the editors. The Bolsheviks had had ample proof of the consternation that their base act had aroused.

On 3rd August I sent a second communication to the Grand Duke, in which I enclosed two drawings I had made from memory of the houses in Tobol'sk and Ekaterinburg. I also visited Madame Vyrubova frequently; she quite approved of the step I had taken. At last all my papers were ready, and, as Schill had kindly lent me 1,500 roubles, I was able to leave Petersburg. On 15th August I arrived at Orsha, the frontier of the Soviet paradise.

At the frontier station an indescribable state of affairs prevailed. The railway station was full of people, all the lines were occupied, and all the carriages were packed. Everyone was awaiting the opening of the frontier which had been closed until further notice. This state of things lasted for over a week; only hospital trains were allowed to pass through.

The frontier was a few steps from the railway station. The passenger station was in Russia, the

goods station in German occupation. A wire barricade about ten feet high formed the frontier, which was densely posted with German sentries. On our side there were no regular frontier guards; only here and there were to be seen occasional tattered figures clad in semi-military, semi-civilian garb, with their rifles slung on string instead of straps. Once as I was going along the boundary line I heard a dialogue in progress on the German side, concerning a passing Soviet patrol:

“Look there, Karl, what kind of scoundrels are those?”

“They are the Russian frontier guards.”

“You don’t say so. . . . I thought. . . .”

These words were like a knife in my heart. What a disgrace! To what depths we had sunk!

I was going to the frontier office where a large number of sentries were standing, and a great crowd of people who wished to get to the other side. Several non-commissioned officers and corporals were inspecting papers. I tried my luck, but when my turn came, a sergeant said very politely:

“It is quite impossible. Only persons living on the frontier are allowed through here.”

I had to go back to the station. In the first-class waiting-room, I caught sight of the tall figure of a German hussar officer, who was slowly pacing up and down, with a cigarette in his mouth and a riding-whip in his hand. I decided to take a chance and, going up to the lieutenant, I said to him in German:

"Excuse me, Lieutenant, may I have a word with you?"

He turned round in surprise: "What do you want then?"

"I am a Russian officer, and I am travelling from Petersburg on very important business to His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Hesse."

"Have you papers?"

"Certainly."

"Then come to the boundary lines at ten o'clock to-morrow."

With his words he turned away and continued his perambulation.

CHAPTER 20

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARBED WIRE

I SPENT the night on a hard bench and returned to the frontier office early next morning. On the way there I overheard a conversation to the effect that the Bolsheviks issued foreign travel-permits to many people—only at a price. I noted this and went on my way. At ten o'clock the officer, with true German punctuality, came out of the guard house and ordered the sentry to let me pass. I was taken into the hut, where I found two other German officers, a general staff captain, and a lieutenant in the Air Service. After mutual introductions they asked to see my papers. As I brought them out the lieutenant in the Air Service, who had observed how carefully I had hidden them, remarked: "Excellent! Perfect! That's exactly what I did when I was in London."

After the officers had convinced themselves of the genuineness of my documents—they were particularly impressed by the German Consulate's acknowledgment of the receipt of my two letters to the Grand Duke—they became more forthcoming and amiable. They questioned me about the object of my journey,

and the Captain asked me to give the High Command at Orsha my impressions of Petersburg and of life in Soviet Russia. They detailed a soldier to escort me there.

Near the goods station the Germans had conjured up as if by magic a whole town of solid wooden buildings most attractively clean looking and lit by electric light. There were little gardens in front of all the houses, and many shops with soldiers standing about before them; the streets bore names like "Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse," "Hindenburg-Strasse," and the like. The network of telegraph and telephone wires was very dense.

My escort took me to a house labelled "Kommandantur," and announced me. A tall lieutenant received me with the utmost politeness, inquired my reason for coming there, and noted down all the information I could give him about conditions on the other side of the wire barricade. He questioned me on the attitude to the Germans over there, and I told him quite plainly that people were indignant with the Germans on account of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, and that the Entente had still many adherents. In spite of this, however, people would have hailed the Germans as liberators if they had continued their advance on Petersburg in January; but the present policy of the Reich, which was quite different in the North from what it was in the South, was merely undermining its prestige and might even be fatal for Germany, since the Bolshevik pestilence

would also be carried there. Lieutenant Kroll listened to me without speaking; but my last words made him smile and say: "We have no fear of that."

I, however, firmly maintained that it would be a good thing if the Germans cleared the Bolsheviks from Petersburg and Moscow and drove them to the Volga, where they would automatically perish. But if the German High Command did not make up its mind to this step in the next two months, I very much feared that Germany would repent of this mistake and lose the war. The lieutenant was very much annoyed at my words.

"How can you say such a thing?" he cried.
"We cannot lose the war. That is absurd."

I answered that I would not dispute the matter with him, but that I remained of the same opinion. After a short discussion of the subject, the lieutenant amiably remarked:

"I am very glad that you have succeeded in fleeing from the Soviet paradise. You will continue your journey to-day, I suppose? If you want to go to Germany you must apply for a permit to the Eastern High Command."

I replied that I must first go to Kiev to talk over the rescue of the Imperial Family with certain people, and that at present I must return once more to Soviet Russia. Lieutenant Kroll looked at me as if I were crazy and said: "Why?" I explained that my luggage was still at the station; I had been

unable to bring it with me for fear of attracting the attention of the comrades.

I said good-bye to the German officer, and with great reluctance returned once more to the realm of despotism, the realm of mobocracy. Next day I visited the Soviet office of the little town of Orsha, where I saw on the door an announcement to the effect that the frontier was closed to all except invalids, Soviet officials, and students. A load fell from my heart as I read this: was I not an invalid Soviet official?

When my turn came a person inspected my papers, found them satisfactory, and stamped them. I was overjoyed and tried to pass twenty-five roubles to the comrade, but he refused it, saying: "What are you thinking of, comrade? From you I take nothing."

With this document in my pocket I hired a cab, and drove to the frontier office. My driver stopped before the Soviet customs office; two dejected figures took my passport and the rest of my papers and conducted me into the building. The old customs officer asked whether I had anything in my trunk, but when I gave him twenty cigarettes, he let me go unscathed. My papers were handed back to me, and I urged the driver to make haste so that I should not lose the train. I could scarcely believe that the red horror was now over. At the gate of the frontier office I showed my papers. The sentry on guard read them and let me through. I was now in

a new, free world. I took off my cap and crossed myself.

The express train, Zhlobin-Kiev, travelled fast and exactly according to time-table. The little stations which it flew past were clean and guarded by the inevitable German sentries in helmets. I sat in a clean compartment with comfortably upholstered seats. Notices were posted everywhere: "Smokers," "Engaged," "For officers only." All the brass fittings shone like gold, the floors were cleanly swept, and the windows brightly polished. In the evening the guard brought clean sheets and made up my bed.

On parts of the line the carriages were full, but never in excess of the prescribed number of passengers. At the stations the soldiers always addressed me as "Your Honour," and saluted smartly. In a word, a few hours away from the Soviet paradise everything was as it used to be. Of course, the consciousness that the cause of this order was the German military boot, which was firmly planted on Russian soil, and before which the Russian people grovelled on all fours, was extremely distressing.

I recalled the infuriated faces of the commissars I had met in Orsha. Now that I was outside their sphere of influence and in complete safety I had had a mind to play a schoolboy trick. I was now wearing an officer's badge on my cap and the rosette of the Order of St. George on my coat; on the way to the station I met a magnificent phaeton with three occupants, one of whom was the commissar who

had issued my travelling permit. We recognized each other at once. At first he was amazed, then he said something to his companions, and his face was distorted with rage. I could restrain myself no longer, but lifted my cap, waved to the phaeton, and cried with the full strength of my lungs:

“Comrades! give my kind regards to the Soviets.”

I arrived at Kiev on the 19th August. I left my luggage at the station and proceeded on foot into the town, which had changed very little. There were no visible traces of the German occupation; Ukrainian police in military uniforms with rifles slung round their shoulders were standing in the streets; of German sentries there was no sign. The masses were strolling up and down the Kreshchatik; all the shops and cafés were packed; one saw magnificent turn-outs, luxurious motor cars, and heard the cries of the trotting drivers. All this life and gaiety were explained by the fact that there was in Kiev a large number of refugees from Petersburg and Moscow enjoying their freedom, and squandering their money in every way they could think of. In Kiev at that time there was assuredly no lack of pleasure resorts of the most varied kind.

There was no sign of any kind of “ukrainization.” Everybody talked Russian and the signs were in Russian; there were, it is true, Ukrainian newspapers, but I don’t imagine anyone read them. In all the new State offices only Russian was spoken, and even

the guardians of the law were our old police and gendarmes in Ukrainian uniform. In spite of this apparent lightness of heart, however, a certain atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety for the morrow hung over the town, as if everyone was drowning his forebodings of coming events in a round of amusements.

In the crowd could be seen innumerable officers of all arms of the service, some in the old Russian uniform, but without epaulettes, and some in magnificent new Ukrainian uniform. A third class of officers was also represented who wore a stripe on their left sleeve. One day I went up to an ensign and asked him what this stripe signified. He explained that this was the badge of the Astrakhan Cossack Army, which was stationed in the neighbourhood of Tsaritsyn and was recruiting officers. The recruiting office was in the Hotel Praga on Vladimir Street. It came out in the course of conversation that the ensign was a nephew of Senator Sh., whose family were friends of my family. We were both very glad to have met. He told me that the Astrakhan Army was composed of Cossacks and Kalmucks, and was under the command of the Ataman, Prince Tundutov.

Sh. persuaded me to join this army. I went to the recruiting office, where I had a very friendly reception, and enrolled that very day in this force, whose principles were in complete harmony with my own. Through the good offices of a captain I got into

touch with the German High Command, and sent a telegram to the Grand Duke in which I informed him of my arrival in Kiev. I also asked whether it would be agreeable to the Grand Duke that I should come to Germany. My intention was to await the Grand Duke's reply in Kiev and then to go to Beletskovka, to see Madame Den and tell her all that had happened. Later, I intended to go to Odessa to visit my father, whom I had not seen since June 1917.

In the interval I also visited the leader of the loyalist party in Kiev, F. N. Bezak, who invited me to lunch. Other distinguished South Russian monarchist leaders were also present on this occasion, among them P. V. Skarzhynskii, ex-Governor of Volhynia, Katenin, the former president of the Censor's Department, and A. A. Panteleev, Colonel of the Guards Cavalry. I told my fellow guests all my experiences, and also mentioned my letters to the Grand Duke. They listened to me very attentively, and I could see from the conversation that they all relied completely on Markov II, and had not taken any steps worth mentioning on their own initiative. They pleaded the difficult position in which they found themselves owing to the continual changes of Government, their defective and haphazard communication with Petersburg, and their ignorance of what Markov was doing. They were all greatly surprised that he had not been successful in collecting the necessary funds.

F. N. Bezak told me that Madame Den had been present at the last meeting of the monarchist party, and had once more strongly asserted her faith in Markov's efficiency. He also told me that rumours were current to the effect that not only the Tsar but all his family also had been murdered; but I replied that my information showed that this was not in accordance with the facts. At the same time I said quite plainly that it had been a great mistake to rely entirely on Markov II and his organization.

This conversation was not reassuring; on the contrary, it further depressed my spirits. I was doubly glad that I had acted on my own initiative and had appealed to the Grand Duke, whose answer I now impatiently awaited. But, as this was delayed, I decided to go to Beletskovka in the interval.

I did not send word of my visit, and my appearance excited the greatest astonishment. I was received like one risen from the dead, and I had difficulty in defending myself against the flood of questions which poured upon me. I found everybody well: Madame Den had not changed, but my little friend Titi had become a big boy. I gave Madame Den the cigarette-holder which the Tsaritsa had sent.

Madame Den was completely disheartened when I told my story, and even her faith in Markov II and his organization began to waver. She had to own that the doubts I had expressed as early as December 1917 were quite justified. She regretted that she had not gone to Tobol'sk herself; but I was able to

convince her that her presence there would have done more harm than good.

She quite approved of the steps I had taken, for she too had now reached the conclusion that Germany alone could help the Tsaritsa. She wondered why Markov II had not seized his opportunity when the first German representatives came to Petersburg and Moscow in February. She herself had often thought of appealing to them; but, as she was cut off from Markov II, she had not dared to take independent measures, and perhaps evoke diplomatic complications thereby.

We decided to await the Grand Duke's reply. If he expressed a wish to see me, Madame Den and I intended to go and beg him to intervene with all haste.

I rested at Beletskovka for three days, and then went to Odessa to see my father. On my arrival there the sky was red with a conflagration. Great clouds of rasping, reddish smoke were driving over the panic-stricken town; explosions which shook the ground could be heard continually from the direction of the goods station. Men, women, and children were running about the streets, half mad with fear. The crowds were shrieking wildly and hysterically, and seeking refuge in the parts of the town adjoining the coast. Some talked of an earthquake, others of a volcanic eruption; but, as was discovered later, it was the artillery depots in the neighbourhood of the goods station which had blown

up. The air pressure was so great that even in our part of the town all the windows were blown in.

Full of curiosity I made my way to the centre of the town. On the Cathedral Square an indescribable chaos reigned: a flood of humanity was pouring in the direction of the harbour; Austrian motor ambulances were rushing through the crowd. The investigation which followed could not discover the real cause of the explosion. Some maintained that it was the work of the Entente, others blamed the Germans, while others again believed that they saw the hand of the Bolsheviks in the catastrophe. Whatever the cause the event was long the chief topic of conversation in Odessa.

My meeting with my father was a very great joy. I was extremely pleased when, after I had told him everything, he approved of what I had done. When I spoke of the inactivity of the monarchists in Petersburg and Kiev, he said:

“Do you think that perhaps something has been done here in Odessa?” Immediately after the occupation of Odessa by the Austrians, he had applied to the chief of the Union of the Russian People, N. N. Rodzevich, for information about what had been done in the matter of saving the Imperial Family; he had, however, merely received the evasive answer that this question was the province of the Petersburg organization. “The only answer I got,” said my father excitedly, “was that the time had not yet come to overthrow the Bol-

sheviks and restore the monarchy. I retorted that before one could think of restoring the monarchy, one must save the monarch, otherwise we might be in the position of having restored the monarchy and having no monarch."

All the same my father had had no success, and his proposals received no attention. There were at this time three different monarchist organizations in Odessa: the "Union of the Russian People," the "Union of the Archangel Michael," and the "Union of the Russian Nation." The heads of these organizations were good friends of my father, each of whom tried to win him over to his party, and each maintained that his own organization was the only right one.

Odessa made on me the same impression as Kiev, with this difference, that it was more peaceful in Odessa. On the whole things were more orderly in the German occupied district than in the Austrian, and the Germans knew better how to inspire respect. Nevertheless, even in the areas occupied by the Austrians, an orderly state of affairs prevailed, especially where Hungarian units were stationed, as they suppressed with bloodshed any rising of the peasants and any conspiracy.

On my return to Kiev, I called on Bezak and gave him a letter from my father. He read it very carefully, and said that he would think the matter well over, and then reply personally to my father. Unfortunately, the overthrow of the hetmanship

followed soon after, and with it brought to an end all monarchist activities.

At the beginning of September I was summoned to the German High Command. The whole quarter of the town in which it was situated was barricaded, and numerous sentries were posted everywhere. The reason for these measures was the murder of Field Marshal Eichhorn by the Bolsheviks. When I arrived at the High Command, I received a friendly welcome from one Lieutenant V., who told me that two telegrams had arrived for me. Attested copies were handed to me; they read as follows:

Wolfgartenschloss.
25th August 1918.

LIEUTENANT VON MARKOV,
Hotel Praga, Kiev.

Herr Magener of Moscow will get into touch with you.

ERNST LUDWIG, GRAND DUKE OF HESSE.

Diplomatic Delegation,
Moscow.
5th September 1918.

LIEUTENANT VON MARKOV,
Hotel Praga, Kiev.

Herr Magener hopes to be in Kiev in a fortnight.
HAUSSCHILD MAGENER.

CHAPTER 21

THE BITTER END

I CALCULATED that this Herr Magener could not arrive in Kiev before the end of September, and, accordingly, I was very glad to accept the post of head of the recruiting office for the Astrakhan Cossack Army in Kremenchug. The situation of Kremenchug was very convenient for me: on the one hand it was not far from Kiev, with which I had to keep always in touch, and, on the other hand, I was fairly near Beletskovka, which had come to seem like a home to me. I was, it is true, cherishing the idea of going to the Crimea and reporting to the Dowager-Empress, Mariia Feodorovna; but now I had to give up this plan because it would involve the risk of missing Herr Magener.

So, along with my assistant, N. R. Grandmaison, a lieutenant in the Keksgol'm Life Guards Regiment, I proceeded to Kremenchug. When I took over the direction of the recruiting office I came into conflict with some of my friends who had enlisted in the "Voluntary Army," commanded by General Alexeev, and stationed on the Kuban River. The officers' corps was at that time divided into two camps: the majority were for the "Voluntary

Army," which still remained loyal to the Entente and regarded the Germans as the enemy, although it was the Germans who had freed half Russia from the Bolshevik yoke. This section of the officers criticized and even abused the Hetman of the Don Cossacks, General Krasnov, who had accepted the protection of the Germans, and with their help had cleared the Bolsheviks from the Don district.

We officers, whether we belonged to the Astrakhan, the Voluntary, or the Don Cossack Army, all regarded the Ukraine as a comic opera State which the Germans had created for their own convenience and in their own interests. The most energetic section of the officers joined the Russian organizations, and only very few enlisted in the Ukrainian army. I confess that I too took a lively share in the universal mockery of Ukrainian institutions, and did not recognize the sovereignty of the Ukrainian State.

The beginning of October found me once again in Kiev; Heir Magener had not yet arrived, however. After the defeat of the Bulgarians on the Salonika Front, Bulgaria was forced to sue for a separate peace, and Germany thus lost one of her allies, and at the same time all communication with Turkey and Asia Minor.

There were signs of nervousness to be felt in the Kiev High Command, and this was reflected in the life of the town. All sorts of rumours were flying about and adding to the general mood of panic; the

comrade-Bolsheviks were expectantly raising their heads.

Herr Magener appeared at last, and I went at once to the Palace Hotel where he was putting up. He was an elderly man, who had a perfect command of Russian, and spoke it without any accent. He had lived in Russia for twenty years and carried on a technical office in a seaport; shortly before the beginning of the war he returned to his native Germany, and since then had held a post in the Foreign Office.

He questioned me in detail about all I knew of the life of the Imperial Family in Siberia, and the measures which had so far been taken for their release. I told him what I knew, and he listened attentively. "To judge from what you say," he then remarked, "no organization exists in Siberia at the moment, and you have no longer any communication with that region?" I was obliged to assent.

"Then I must tell you quite plainly that your organization has not displayed any particular energy in the affair. That does not surprise me, as I had already heard it in Moscow. I am also aware that our High Command got into touch with Russian monarchists at the time of the advance on Petersburg; general political questions were discussed on that occasion, but not a word was said about the Tsar and his Family. That gave us the impression that this problem had already been solved by the monarchists themselves! But I must infer from what

you say that Markov II took no decisive steps whatever in February, if we disregard the despatch of one solitary officer! Why did you not appeal to the Grand Duke when you first recognized the ineffectiveness of the organization?"

I own that this question embarrassed me. I could only reply that I had not taken this step because I felt myself too insignificant. I was only a simple member of the organization, and had to obey my leaders, who could see further than I could.

Herr Magener shook his head disapprovingly. "You think then that the German Government alone is in a position to save the Tsaritsa and her Family from the clutches of the Bolsheviks?"

"Yes."

"Well, if the Northern organizations could accomplish nothing, perhaps the Southern ones have done something?"

Next day Magener and I called on Bezak. Skarzhinskii and Katenin were also present at the interview. Magener addressed the company quite directly. "I have come to discover, gentlemen, what you have done for your Emperor and his Family."

"We have in fact done nothing, or rather, from here we were not in a position to do anything. But we should be very glad to learn what steps you have taken in the matter," answered F. N. Bezak.

A painful pause followed; then Magener went on: "I have been instructed to get into communication

with the monarchist organization in Russia, and to bring my plans into line with what you have already undertaken. For this purpose I sought out Lieutenant Markov, who had written to the Grand Duke, and learned from him the details of his stay in Siberia. Now I want to hear what is your view of the situation and what steps you intend to take."

The rest of the conversation must have convinced Magener that all present shared my view that Germany alone could save the Imperial Family. The interview then closed; Magener declared that he had noted this belief of the Russian monarchists, and would pass it on. When we left Bezak's house, we were both in a silent and gloomy mood. Finally Magener said:

"I don't understand you Russians at all. You insist that Germany and only Germany can, nay must, save the Tsaritsa and her children. But it is a matter of common knowledge that your Empress had become completely Russianized. She would not go to Germany nor accept help from the Germans on any conditions."

I knew that this statement was founded on fact; but I did not want to discourage Magener, and so I tried to convince him that this was not the moment for considering whether the Tsaritsa would or would not agree to accept German assistance. From mere considerations of humanity she must be saved from the Bolsheviks, and taken to Sweden perhaps, as I had suggested in my letter to the Grand Duke.

Magener then composed a telegram to his chiefs; it read:

"The Markov group insist categorically that only Germany is in a position to settle the question referred to."

Why Bezak and his fellow-workers were designated as my "group" in this telegram, I did not know; but I did not wish to draw the amiable Magener into any further discussion. Next morning he departed for Odessa, and I wrote a long letter to Madame Den, asking her to come to Kiev.

But from that moment all my calculations went astray, and subsequent events entirely wrecked our plans. On the 5th of November the Petliura rebellion broke out, and plunged the whole of the Ukraine into a state of complete anarchy. Kiev was besieged by bands of the notorious "bat'ka"; we Russian officers now became involuntary defenders of the movement for Ukrainian independence. Such was the irony of fate!

My reminiscences of this period are outside the scope of this book. I will describe in another work my service with Count Keller, the Commander-in-Chief of the monarchist army of the North, and my service with the German Command where, along with Major-General Gurko, I assisted Russian officers and their families to escape to Germany.

As the railway connection between Odessa and Kiev was now cut off, Magener could not return to Kiev, and I was unable to get into communication

with him. At this time also reports of the murder of the whole Imperial Family were once more gaining currency; I continued to reject this horrible idea and refused to believe the rumours. Through the Swiss Consul in Kiev I had an opportunity of going to Odessa to join my friends, but I preferred to go to Germany to see the Grand Duke of Hesse. I regarded this step as my last duty to those for whom I prayed, whom I worshipped, and whom I had loyally and honourably served all my life.

I was not a witness of their tragic end; but I had been a witness of their infinite martyrdom. In the snowfields of far Tobol'sk I had seen the Emperor and his Family whom all had abandoned and forgotten, and I wished to leave the Grand Duke himself to draw the final conclusion from my experiences.

On 21st January I set out for Germany, wearing a German military uniform, with the 68th Infantry Regiment. Among the soldiers I passed as a student who intended to complete his studies abroad, and was employed as interpreter in the service of the Kiev Command. All who love their country even a little will understand my emotions in the hour when I said farewell to the soil of Holy Russia.

On 31st January I arrived in Berlin and reported at once to Major-General D. N. Pototskiĭ, our military representative in Germany. The General thanked me for my services to the Russian cause, and kept me with him as an orderly officer.

On the first day of Easter I had the great honour of

being received at Darmstadt by the Grand Duke of Hesse. The audience lasted more than four hours; I was introduced to the Grand Duchess and the Princes, and at lunch I had to give an account of all my Siberian experiences. In warm and touching words the Grand Duke thanked me for all I had done for his sister. Next day Count Kuno von Hardenberg, the Marshall of the Court of His Royal Highness, called on me and informed me that I might regard myself as the guest of the Grand Duke. I received a seat in the Grand Ducal theatre, and Count Hardenberg personally showed me the picture gallery and conducted me over the Palace. Having learned by chance of my ear trouble, the Count sent me to the Grand Duke's physician. I shall never forget the Grand Duke's kind welcome and the friendly offices of Count Hardenberg.

At the Grand Duke's wish I went to see Prince Heinrich of Prussia, whose wife, the Princess Irene, was the Tsaritsa's eldest sister. I was the guest of Their Royal Highnesses for three days. I felt it a great happiness to spend these days with the sister of my idolized Empress and her noble husband, who both captivated me by their kindness and cordiality.

In January 1920 I sent a detailed report to the Dowager-Empress Maria Feodorovna, and in April of the same year, at the command of the Empress, Admiral Prince Viazemskii sent me an autographed portrait of Her Majesty and a cheque for 6,000 marks to enable me to undergo the operation which the

severe injury to my ear had made urgently necessary. I owe it to this kind present from Her Majesty that I was saved from deafness, as I was cured by an operation performed by Professor Klaus in Berlin. I was now able to take up the struggle for existence in a foreign country.

The memory of the forsaken Imperial Prisoners in distant Siberia will never be effaced from my heart and soul. I am continually haunted by the sad smile of my idolized Empress as I saw her for the last time in Tobol'sk. For we, who called ourselves loyal subjects, did not do our duty to the Imperial Family. We must confess that we did not keep the oath we swore on the Cross and the Holy Gospel. For this crime the Russian people, which has agonized for ten years in the clutches of the Bolshevik tyranny, must suffer eternally, and we, fugitives from our native land, vegetate in foreign lands, pursued and tormented by hunger, cold, and poverty.



09-BSC-949

